

FOLK
TALES
OF A
SAVAGE


Lobagola

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FOLK TALES OF A SAVAGE





The Story Teller



THE
**FOLK
TALES**
OF A
SAVAGE
by
Lobagola



Illustrated by
Erick Berry
1930

Alfred A. Knopf



London

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FOLK TALES OF A SAVAGE

INTRODUCTION

OUR folk tales in the Ondo bush in West Africa are told in song. Very often the story-teller relates a story to the whole village circle. Then everyone present, as he does this, sentence by sentence, repeats aloud every word that he says. When the fires are lit in the villages at night to keep out wild beasts and snakes, and when the tom-toms beat, the mothers, and sometimes even the fathers, tell stories to all who happen to be in their particular home-compounds. The older folk and the children all sit around and enjoy these tales. In my home in West Africa we have no newspapers, no books, no moving pictures, and no theaters. Story-telling takes the place of all these.

Our African children rarely forget the stories that

they hear. They use them day after day in their games, when they recite them as children here recite "London Bridge Is Falling Down," which is really an old story.

Of course I do not remember every story that I heard from my mother and from my people, but I remember the substance and the spirit of what I heard. The stories that I tell in this book are precisely the same in nature as the stories that I heard in my African home many years ago, when I was a child. I have written these stories merely from memory, for of course, as a savage, I took no notes whatever. I have told them as nearly as possible in harmony with the subjects and the manner of the stories that I heard so long ago. Though the words, of course, are different, the spirit and the manner of telling are wholly African.

Some critics may say that these stories that I tell are not truly African because they end with maxims, like those to be found in European tales. Let me say that even in West Africa we have folk wisdom, and that all folk wisdom is necessarily much the same. The problems of life in all parts of the world are much alike.

When my faithful follower, Enfiki, and I were lost in the Ondo bush, as I have related in the story of my

life, told in another book, I was half delirious with fever, and half frightened because of the danger of my surroundings. At that time, to comfort me, my faithful Enfiki told me enough stories about bush animals and bush reptiles and bush people to fill two books the size of this one. They were the stories that Enfiki had heard and had remembered, mostly concerning the creatures of the jungle, but very largely concerning witches and witch doctors.

I hope some time to write still more folk stories of West Africa, for there are a host of stories that I have to tell, such as those Enfiki told me, about witches, witch doctors, and medicine men, as well as stories about the wild life in the bush. Only a native son of the West African bush can tell such stories as those I have to tell, and no native of my particular region of West Africa, with caste, would tell the stories to outsiders.

Bata Kindai Amgoza Ibn Lobagola

New York City, 1929



FOLK TALES
of a
SAVAGE

THE FIRST NIGHT

The Big Hippo Who Was Too Noisy and Clumsy



THE FIRST NIGHT

THE BIG HIPPO WHO WAS TOO NOISY AND CLUMSY

WHO was the village Story-teller who sat by the fire in our village in the Ondo bush, in the unvisited part of West Africa? No one knew. Even he did not know. He was an old, wrinkled man, too old and

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too feeble to go on the hunt or the war trail. He liked everyone, and everyone liked him. He made and shaped anything that was needed. He spoke kindly to men, to children, and to women. He gave help and wise advice to everyone.

When he was a small boy, perhaps eight or nine years old, he had lived in a village of the Ondo bush, and there had learned the language of the people. Then the raiders had come, looking for slaves. They had taken him, with his father and his mother, and had carried him far away. He had seen more of the world than had any other man in the entire village. He had been beyond the bush, out on the great plains. He had seen and had hunted animals that others in the village had never seen. He had lived among many races of people. He had even been to the Water-that-has-no-end, the great sea, that is too great for any canoe to cross. He had learned many languages, had dealt with many peoples, had lived in many strange regions, had hunted and warred, married, had children of his own, seen good fortune and bad fortune, and then, at last, when he was old, somehow found his way

back through the thick jungle, back from the muddy Niger River, into the heart of the Ondo bush.

The wrinkled old Story-teller had scars all over his body where arrows and assagais and the claws and teeth of wild animals had left their marks. His hair had grown white, and his arms were thin and long. In his eyes was the flash of old battle and adventure, and in his mind was the wisdom that had come from many years and from hard experience. He looked sharply at the young men and weighed their faults and virtues. Night after night, as he sat by the village fire, the old Story-teller set forth his wisdom in the form of stories.

He enjoyed the telling of tales, and the people of the village enjoyed hearing them. The men became silent when the old man held out his hand or poked the fire or moved as if to speak. The boys crowded in between the men as far as they dared, and kept breathless, hoping that they might hear the Story-teller's tales before they should be driven away.

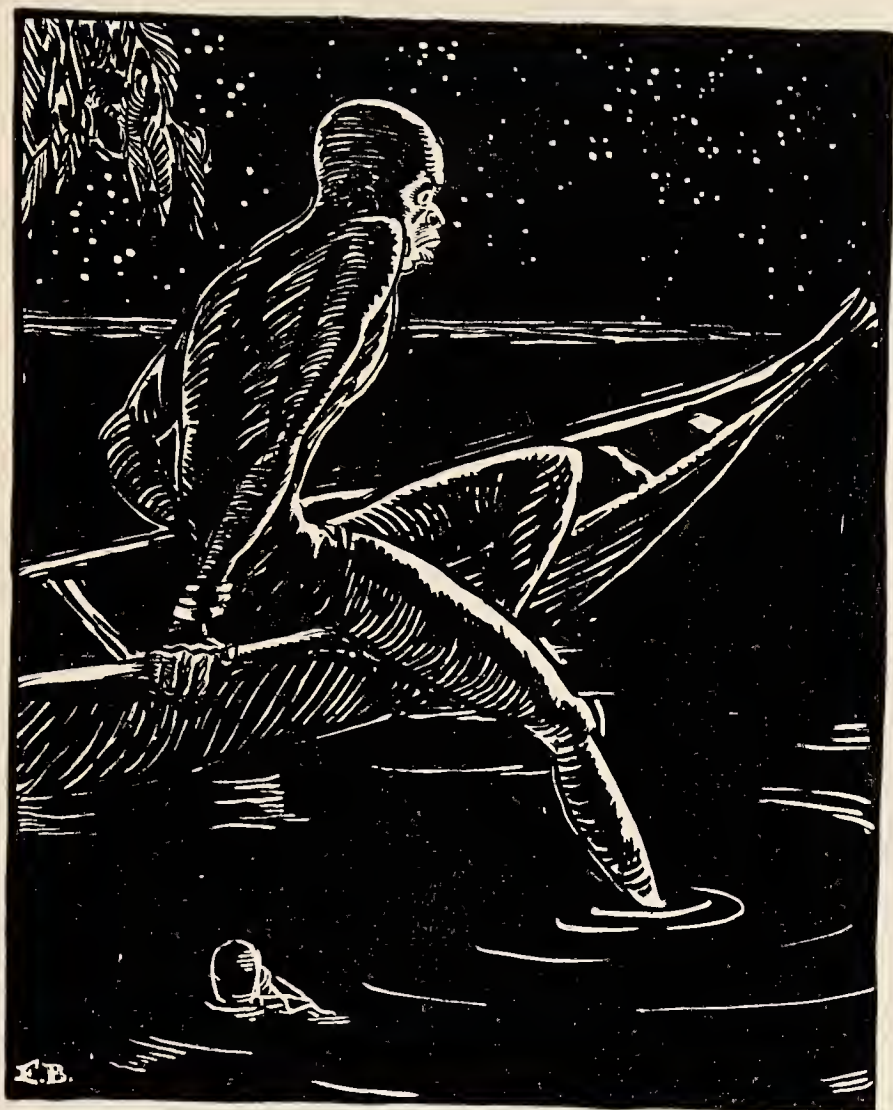
The village fire lighted the circle of black faces and glittered in the eyes of the Story-teller. Sometimes,

in the heat of a story, he rose and acted out the tale, or a part of it. He held every hearer spell-bound. He told stories that every one would remember until his dying day. He was the village Story-teller, the Wise Man, the Traveled One, the Far-Goer, the Giver-of-Good-Advice, the Friend-of-Animals, the Teacher-of-Men.

One night the old man called for a drink. A boy ran quickly and brought a coconut cup full of water, but the boy hurried so, in his eagerness to help the old Story-teller, that he stumbled and spilled the water.

Later, when the boy had been reproved, and when he had brought another coconut cup of water, and when he had sat down, ashamed, where the old man motioned for him to sit, the Story-teller said:

Once there was a great clumsy Hippo who lived in a wide, muddy river. He thought it sport to glide softly down the river, with his big head under the water, and reach out for a canoe and tip it over, or bite it in two with one bite of his great jaws.



One night this Hippo heard the splash of a paddle farther up the river, and he knew that a Fisherman was there in a canoe. Instead of doing what he should have done and calling his friends so that they might go with him, this selfish Hippo started alone to get the Fisherman. First he went out into the middle of the river and held his head up to make sure that what he had heard was the noise of a paddle and not the splashing of one of the Crocodiles that lived on the mud bank at the bend of the river. Far away up the river he heard the dipping of a paddle. There he saw the glimmer of the torch that the Fisherman carried to attract the Fish.

“Oh,” said the Hippo to himself, “what fun I am going to have! I shall swim along to the Man in the canoe, and before he knows it, I shall bite his canoe into two pieces and throw him into the water. How he will yell for help!”

Now, the Fisherman was a skilled Man, and he knew that there were many Hippos in the river, as well as Crocodiles. He thought that he heard a sound, and so, because he was wise, he put out his light and lis-

tened. With his net cast and his light out, he sat there, listening to every sound on the dark river and thinking of his wives and children.

The Hippo went swimming up the river towards the canoe. Every little while he had to lift his head out of the water to take a breath. When he did this, he was so clumsy that he made a great sighing noise and a little gurgling of the water. For that reason the Fisherman knew that the Hippo was swimming towards the canoe with the thought of biting it in two. When the noise of the Hippo's breathing came near enough, the Fisherman did not get excited. He dipped his paddle quietly into the water and paddled to the shore, paddling the boat so that he made no noise at all.

When the clumsy Hippo reached the place where he thought the canoe was, he lifted his head and looked for it, but he could not find it anywhere. Then he grunted aloud in surprise. The Fisherman, who was now at the bank, holding on by the thick bushes, laughed loudly. "Ha, ha, I fooled you that time, you noisy, clumsy fellow, you big noisy Hippo!" Then

the Fisherman pulled his canoe out of the water and went to his village.

The Hippo ground his big teeth in anger when he heard the Fisherman laugh at him. "I will get the Fisherman yet," said the Hippo. So he swam to the shore and climbed up out of the water, to go to the Man's village and push down some of the huts and make deep holes where the Men would walk. As he came up out of the water, he made such a noise and breathed so heavily that the Fisherman heard him, and he and his companions came running with torches and assagais to drive the clumsy Hippo back into the river.

The Hippo had to run as fast as he could, and because it was a dark night, and because no Hippo can see well, he ran into a tree and bumped his nose so that he said "Ummmmphhh!" Then, the next thing he knew, he ran off a steep part of the bank of the river and fell head over heels, with a great splash, into the river.

All the men of the village laughed and laughed at

the noise that the clumsy Hippo made and at the way that he fell, ker-splash, into the river.

Later the big clumsy Hippo met a Leopard who was walking in the night, so quietly that he made no sound at all, and so carefully that he did not make even a blade of grass quiver. He said to the Leopard: "If I had gone as quietly as you go, brave warrior Leopard, I should not have missed catching a Fisherman just now, and I should not have roused the whole village."

"If I went as noisily as you do," answered the Leopard, "I should have no luck in my hunting. A warrior must be cautious and quiet. One who would learn how to be skilful must first learn how not to be clumsy and careless."

THE SECOND NIGHT

The Monkey Whose Tail Was Not Caught



THE SECOND NIGHT
THE MONKEY WHOSE TAIL
WAS NOT CAUGHT

THE hunters sat around the fire, talking about their bad luck. They had set many traps in places where they thought the bush animals were certain to go.

When they had visited the traps, they had found that they had caught nothing at all. They found every trap empty and even untouched.

"Some evil spirit saw us set the traps, or perhaps it was some animal that saw us, and then told the others, so that they all kept away. Waaaa! It is bad. Now we shall have to go far and set our traps in new places."

The old Story-teller smiled, and looked into the fire.

"Why do you smile, Teller of Tales?" asked one of the men.

"I smile because I think of the monkey whose tail was not caught. You spoke of traps, and the story came into my mind. It is a story that I heard when I was but a boy, when I sat by the fire in a place far from here. I smile at thought of the story, and also at thought of the days when I was young, many, many moons ago."

"Speak," said the Head Man of the village. "We listen."

The Story-teller smiled again, looked into the fire, as if he saw many things, and began.

One day in an open place on the edge of the bush a wicked Leopard lay, as Leopards do, in the sunshine that came through the trees. He was hungry, for Leopards are always hungry. He thought what trouble it was for him to run here and there and work hard to get something to eat. This Leopard licked his paws and stretched a little and then spoke out loud, and said: "Oh, I wish a Zebra would walk by, or a little Gazelle! Oh, I wish one of those mischievous Monkeys would drop down in front of me! What a good dinner I should have, without any trouble to go and find it!"

Now, you all know that Leopards are brave, and that they think quickly, so that it is dangerous even for many brave Men to fight one Leopard. The Monkey people do not like Leopards, but they can do nothing against them except run away on the vines and shriek out bad things at the Leopards. The Monkey people are our little brothers of the bush. They can do something that no Leopard can do so well: they can think. As quick and as smart as Leopards are, the Monkey

people are quicker and smarter, just as we are quicker and smarter than the Monkey people.

It happened that a Monkey had been hiding in the tree-tops, over the place where the Leopard lay sleeping. This Monkey, who was an old and wise Monkey, had watched the Leopard, had seen him stretch out his paws and lick them, and had heard him say that he would like to eat a Zebra or a Gazelle or even a Monkey. That wish that the lazy Leopard spoke out loud made the wise old Monkey so angry that he jumped to another place on the tree and called the Leopard a lazy, wicked murderer, and said it over many times, the way Monkey people say things.

Now, the Leopard, as you all know, is a wicked animal, and he has a bad temper. He was so angry when he heard what the Monkey said, and when he saw how near he was to a good dinner that he could not get, that he beat his tail on the ground and stood up and said many bad things back to the Monkey. Then, at once, the Leopard fell down on the ground again and said more bad things. It was because the

Leopard can think so quickly that he did this. In the midst of his anger he had thought of a trick by which he might catch the Monkey. He knew that he could not catch the Monkey in any other way than by a trick, for he knew that the Monkey would run away on the vines much faster than he could follow.

The wicked Leopard cursed the Monkey, and said: "Oh! Oh! If I had not hurt my foot, so that I can hardly move, I should catch you and make you sorry. Now I am afraid that I shall die. I have stuck a great thorn in my paw, and I cannot walk. I shall lie here and starve to death. If you will come down to me and pull the thorn out, I will forget all the wicked words you spoke to me. I will thank you, and forever afterwards I will do no harm to you or to your good Monkey people. Please come down and help me."

The Monkey was a wise old Monkey, and he knew as many tricks as the Leopard knew. He thought it would be a pleasant thing to do, and a thing that would make all the Monkey people laugh when he told them about it, to fool the wicked Leopard in the

same way that the Leopard was trying to fool him. So the wise old Monkey said: "Oh, brave Leopard, I am so sorry that I called you names when you are hurt, and when you cannot move. Indeed, I should like to come down and help you by pulling out the thorn from your paw. Then you would not harm me or any of my Monkey people. But how can I come down? That is why I am in such a bad temper, and that is why I called you names. I was jumping here in the trees, and I caught my tail between a great vine and the trunk of the tree, and I cannot get it out. I cannot move. How *can* I help you?"

At once the wicked Leopard jumped up and smacked his lips. He said: "Ah, my smart old Monkey, now I've got you at last, and I shall have a good dinner. How foolish you Monkeys are! If you had not told me you were caught, I should not have known it. Now I shall come up and get you"; and he started to leap into the branches of the tree.

The wise old Monkey laughed, and said: "You foolish, wicked Leopard! You are more foolish than even I thought you were! You cannot get me."

"We shall soon see," said the Leopard, as he jumped again. "You will talk in a different way when I get up to where you are. I shall loosen your tail all right. Don't be afraid of that."

The wise old Monkey jumped to another vine and then stopped and called the Leopard such bad names that he spit in the air. The Monkey said: "Your paw was not hurt, and my tail was not caught. You did not fool me, but I fooled you." Then the old Monkey jumped to another vine and stopped and called the Leopard all the bad names he could think of. Then he said them over many, many times. In doing this the Monkey called many of the Monkey people, who were curious to see what the noise was about, and so there were hundreds of the Monkey people sitting all about on the vines, and all of them called the Leopard all the bad names that the Monkey people know, and they know many.

The Leopard could do nothing but snarl and spit and jump against the trees, and all the Monkey people laughed at him and called him names. So the wicked

Leopard went away, angry and ashamed. As he went, the wise old Monkey called out to him: "When you try to cheat others, look out that you don't get cheated yourself."

THE THIRD NIGHT

The Gazelle Who Took Care of Lion Cubs



THE THIRD NIGHT

THE GAZELLE WHO TOOK CARE OF
LION CUBS

ONE of the village men found in the bush a kitten

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that belonged to one of the wood-cats. He picked it up and brought it to the village, where he kept it in his hut. The other men laughed at him a great deal. One night at the fire, when the men had again laughed at the man and his wood-kitten, the old Story-teller said, "Is it stranger that a man should take care of a wood-cat, or that a gazelle should take care of a lion?"

All the men laughed, and then at once became quiet, for they knew that the Story-teller had in mind a story.

The old man looked at the hunter who had brought in the wood-kitten, and then he spoke.

Once a family of little Lion cubs were left alone to play by themselves. Some of the time they slept, and some of the time they rolled over one another. They were too little to be afraid of anything in the bush, and not old enough to wish to attack any creature that might come.

The Lion, who was the King of the Beasts of the Bush and of the Plain, had promised a sick Jackal mother, whose husband had been killed, that he would bring her enough food for herself and all her children.

The Lion forgot what he had promised, and the sick Jackal mother and her children had nothing to eat for several days. Then a Hyena passed by. The Hyena is the blood-brother of the Jackal. For that reason he brought food and saved the lives of the Jackal family.

Now, the Jackal told the Hyena that the Lion had not kept his word. The Hyena told the other Hyenas, and they told other people of the bush, so that at last the news came to the ears of the Buffalo and the Rhino, neither of which thinks of the Lion as a real king. All the animals of the bush began to say that the Lion did not keep his word. When the wise old Elephant heard this, and learned all that had happened, he said: "It is not good to give judgment until you hear all that is to be said. Let us ask the Lion to come to us."

It was to this council of the People of the Bush that the Lion had gone, and because it was such a great council, Mother Lion thought that she ought to go with him. She could not take the Lion children, so she left them at home. "Now, be good children and go to sleep. And don't run away and get lost. Mother will come back soon," she said. Then Mother Lion

bit every Lion cub on both ears, which is the way Mother Lions show that they love their children, and off she went with Father Lion to the council of the Beasts of the Bush and of the Plain.

When the two Lions had gone a long way, they met a Mother Gazelle, with her one Gazelle child.

"Now I shall have something to eat," said the Lion.

"No," said the Mother Lion. "You were going to do something for the Jackal, and then you did something else and forgot the Jackal. You should go to the council."

"You are right," answered the Lion. "This time I shall do one thing at a time, and so I shall not forget to keep my promises."

When the Gazelle saw that the two Lions intended to go straight ahead, she stood still and waited until they came near. "What a pretty Gazelle child!" said Mother Lion.

The Mother Gazelle said nothing.

"I have five little Lion cubs that I left alone in our den," said the Mother Lion. "I am so sorry that there

is no one to take care of them and give them food. I have to go with my husband to the great council."

"Oh, let me take care of your Lion children," said the Mother Gazelle. "I have a baby of my own, and I know how you must feel to go away and leave your Lion babies hungry."

"If you take care of our Lion children," said the two Lions, "we shall see that you come to no harm, neither you nor your Gazelle child."

"It shall be done," said the Gazelle, and she trotted to the den of the Lions.

There she found all the little Lion children crying for something to eat. At once she lay down with them, and said: "Now, my little Lion children, do not cry. Your mother wishes me to take care of you and to keep you quiet and to feed you and to tell you stories."

The little Lion cubs were so small that they let the Mother Gazelle feed them and tell them stories and put them to sleep.

After a long time the two old Lions came back to the den, for the Lion had explained to the council how he had forgotten all about the Jackal. He had

sworn to the council that he would keep every promise he made.

When the Lion saw the Gazelle, he said: "Now we shall have Gazelle for food."

The Mother Lion said: "We promised the Gazelle that no harm would come to her if she took care of our little Lion cubs. Neither you nor I can touch the Gazelle. It is the mark of a head of a tribe that he keep all his promises. The greater the person, the more need that he do what he says he will do."



THE FOURTH NIGHT

The Three Hundred Wicked Monkeys



THE FOURTH NIGHT

THE THREE HUNDRED WICKED MONKEYS

THAT day a troop of monkeys had come climbing over the vines and had dropped down on some of the huts. They had climbed about and jumped here and

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there and torn to pieces everything that they could. They had made so much noise that the men came running to see what was going on. Most of the monkeys at once jumped back into the vines and ran away into the bush, screaming in fear and anger. Two or three monkeys had been hit by stones, so that they lay on the ground, unable to move.

That night, at the village fire, the men sat in the usual circle and talked about the monkey people and their strange ways.

"They are our little brothers," said one of the men.

"They are bad little brothers," another man answered.

"The monkey people are clever," said another, who had been among the men who had driven the monkeys away. "They are like our warriors. They know when to fight and when to run away."

"The old monkeys are clever; the young ones are foolish," said a tall, thin man, as he pushed a boy away from the fire in order to make more room for himself.

"Young people are always foolish," said a fat man.

The Story-teller held out his hand. At once every person stopped talking and looked at the old man.

"I shall tell a story of the foolishness and the wickedness of the monkey people," he said, and then he added sternly, as he looked at the boys who sat as near to the fire as they could get: "Of the foolishness and the wickedness of young monkey people."

One day, in the great Monkey village in the tree-tops of the bush, the Chief of the Monkey people said: "The long rains are coming. There is enough for us to do here in the trees. For a time we shall not go near the villages of Man."

In the tribe there was a young Monkey who thought that he was somebody. He thought that he was as good as the Chief himself, for it is often true that the young do not honor the old, even among the Monkey people. This young Monkey, who thought that he was as wise as those who were older, spoke up and said: "We can easily go to a village of Man and tear the roof and find wonderful things and have much sport, and then get back home here in the trees where

Man cannot come, long before the beginning of the great rains."

"No," said a wise old Monkey, for in the old there is always wisdom.

"Pooh!" said the young Monkey, who thought himself so wise. "I could do it all by myself."

The elders of the Monkey people laughed, as they do, and said to themselves that the young Monkey had no wisdom, but much spirit. They thought, too, that it might be that the old Monkeys were too old and too weak and too much afraid, and that it would be good to let the brave young Monkeys do what they wished. For that reason they said to the young Monkey and to his followers: "It is well. You may go. We do not think it wise, but you are young, and we are old. If you return we shall give you a feast."

Now the Mother Monk, the mother of the tribe, spoke up and said: "Shame on all you young Monkeys! This is foolishness, this wishing to do what your Chief thinks it is not wise to do. What is this world coming to, when young Monkeys dare to think that they are wise and that their elders are foolish!"

The too smart young Monkey laughed at this, and said: "Who can expect a grandmother to agree to anything that is new? It is foolish to keep on doing things the way we have always done them. It is time to make a change. Why must we stay here in the bush just because the long rains are coming? Has not the Chief said that we may go?"

Then the Chief of the Monkey people said: "My son, it is not wise. It is not best. We know, we who are old, we who have seen many things. Still, we are old. It may be that things are different today."

The foolish young Monkey, who thought that he was wiser than his elders, said: "If we do something that is new, we shall gain more honor. It is time to make a change. It is time that young Monkeys should do things."

The old Chief said: "We have heard such talk before. We heard it long ago. We ourselves once did foolish things. That is the way by which we learned wisdom."

"This is not foolish," shouted the young Monkey, who saw that he was going to have his way. "We do

not need the whole tribe. We do not need our warriors. We need no one except young Monkeys. Then he cried to the tribe of the Monkey people: "Are there three hundred young Monkeys who will follow me to danger and to honor?"

Then at once, from all the branches and vines in the bush, there was a great sound as if it were one voice, as all the young Monkeys, all the foolish young Monkeys, answered him: "To the death!"

The wise old Chief of the Monkey people shook his head, and all the elders of the Monkey people shook their heads also, for they knew that the young Monkeys were exceedingly foolish and not at all wise. Then the old Chief of the Monkey people said: "You may go in your foolishness, for out of foolishness and lack of wisdom the young must learn that which is wisdom. Remember, we who are old and wise say that this is foolish. We do not ask you to go, nor do we ask you to stay. You—" and he looked at the young Monkey who thought that he was so smart—"You may act in my place and be Chief of the three hundred. If you do not return before drinking-time

tomorrow, we shall move through the trees and travel towards the rising sun. If you come later, you may find us if you follow fast. If you do not come at all, we shall mourn for your foolishness.”

On hearing this the foolish young Monkey called his three hundred other foolish young Monkeys together, and they swung from vine to vine and went off through the bush towards the villages of Man. As they did this, the women of the Monkey people cried aloud and beat their breasts so that the sound was like the beating of many drums.

Now, it happened that out in the edge of the bush were some Men who were hunters for Elephant. They had dug great pits, and they expected to cover the pits lightly with bamboo and leaves, so that Elephants might fall into the pits and be unable to get out. Then the hunters would kill the Elephants and take the ivory. These hunters had not finished covering the pits. They were at work when they heard the sound of the chattering of Monkeys, for Monkey people, especially young Monkey people, must always chatter. The hunters

ran into the bush and hid, waiting to see what would happen.

The wise old Monkey people would have been careful. Besides, they would have known. The foolish young Monkey people were not careful, and they did not look, and they did not know. They had dropped to the ground as soon as they had left the thick bush, and, having heard the talk of Men, they thought that they were close to a village of Man, and so they came running as fast as they could, every young Monkey wishing to be the first one to jump upon a roof and begin to tear the roof to pieces.

The young Monkey who thought himself so smart gave the Monkey war cry, and he ran ahead, and all the foolish young Monkey people followed close behind him, everyone pushing and crowding, as young Monkey people do, and they all fell into the deep pits, which had such steep, high sides that the Monkeys could not get out, no matter how much they jumped and climbed on one another. You never heard such screaming and yelling, and such moaning and crying, and such begging and pleading, and such complaining

and fault-finding as those Monkey people made, down in those pits.

The hunters laughed and laughed, and stood looking down into the deep pits, laughing to see the young Monkey people try to get out.

A Hyena, who had been hiding near by, heard the screams and knew what had happened. The good Hyena ran as fast as he could off into the bush to the place where the Monkey people lived, and there he told the Chief and the tribe what had happened. The old Chief and all the elders shook their heads and beat their breasts, and one said: "How can you expect to find an old head on young shoulders?" and another said: "It is only from foolishness that one ever learns wisdom."

THE FIFTH NIGHT

The Man Who Thought That He Was Foolish



THE FIFTH NIGHT

THE MAN WHO THOUGHT THAT HE
WAS FOOLISH

THE men at the fire joked a great deal about one of
their number who had been out on the trail and had

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found a little parrot that had fallen to the ground when it was too young to fly. Instead of leaving the parrot where it was, or killing it, the man had picked it up and brought it to the village. There he had made a kind of nest for it and had told his children to guard it from harm. This was such an unusual thing for a man to do that the others laughed at him.

“Are we all to become women and make the animals of the bush our children?” said one.

The man who had brought the parrot home said nothing and listened to all the joking. After there had been much talk, the old Story-teller held out his hand and said slowly, as if he were thinking: “Are not many of the animals of the bush our brothers? Are not the monkey people and the ape people our little brothers?”

The men at the fire made no answer. Everyone looked at the wrinkled old man. “I will tell you about a man who thought that he was foolish,” he said.

Once a young Ape had stepped on a thorn that had broken off in his foot. He had tried to pull it out and

to bite it out, but the thorn stayed in his foot. His foot hurt him a great deal, and he could not run with the Ape people and play catch-me-if-you-can.

Then there came a day when all the Ape people went on a far journey into the bush. The young Ape with the hurt foot wished to go with them, but he had to give it up after he had gone a little way into the bush. He could not keep up with the others, and they were so full of fun that they did not notice that he fell behind. Soon they went out of sight in the bush. For some time he heard their voices, and then the poor young Ape was left alone. He went along as well as he could on three feet, but it was hard for him to do so. Then he lay down on the trail and tore his hair and cried: "Woe is me!"

Soon the young Ape heard a noise, and then he saw a Man come down the trail. "Now I shall be killed," he thought; "the Man has sharp spears, and I cannot run."

When the Man saw the Ape on the trail, he at once raised his assagai to throw it, but when the Ape merely went to one side of the trail, the Man was curious. He

knew that Apes usually leap away at once and then stand and look back. He wondered why this Ape merely dragged himself to one side. The Man lowered his assagai and went slowly towards the Ape. Then he saw what was the trouble.

He thought to himself: "I could kill you with my poisoned spear. Why should I not?" Then he remembered that he himself had once stepped on a thorn and that it had hurt him a great deal. Because he remembered how much the thorn had hurt, and how glad he had been to have it removed by the witch doctor, he thought that he might take the thorn from the Ape's leg.

The Ape was only a young Ape, and so it let the Man touch its leg. The Apes know that Men are their older brothers. Because of that, the Man was able to pull the thorn out. Then he found some healing leaves and bound them on. When the Man went away, without having killed the young Ape, he said: "Farewell, little brother of the bush. Good luck." That was something that the Man had never done before, and he wondered if he had been foolish.

When the Ape people came back from their play in the bush, they were surprised to find the young Ape with his foot bound up. They were still more surprised when they learned that a Man had helped an Ape. The Mother Ape, one of the leaders of the Ape people, said: "It is good. Men are our older brothers. Some are bad brothers, and some are good brothers."

A long time after that the Ape people planned to raid a village of Man. They thought it great sport to go up to the village, pull up the things that the Men make grow for food, jump upon the roofs and tear them to pieces, and even go into the huts and carry away whatever they could find, if the Men were not there.

The Ape people went through the bush and came to the village of Man. They saw that most of the people were at one side of the village, and so, before people could see them, they jumped upon the huts and tore the roofs, and some of the Apes ran into the huts and carried out whatever they could find.

One big Ape found a baby boy in a hut, all alone. The big Ape picked up the baby boy and carried it

out of the hut and ran with it up into a tree. By this time the Men of the village came running with their assagais, and there was much shouting and throwing. The big Apes ran into the tree-tops, dropping many things as they ran, and carrying some. The big Ape who had found the baby boy carried the baby still farther into the bush.

The father of the baby was the Man who had pulled the thorn from the foot of the young Ape a long time before. He pushed through the bush and followed the Ape and the baby everywhere they went, but he could not climb up into the trees, nor could he throw his assagai so far. When the big Ape stopped on a high branch to rest, he looked down at the Man and saw that it was the one who had pulled out the thorn. Then he put his hand on his foot, and the Man knew that this was the Ape whom he had helped.

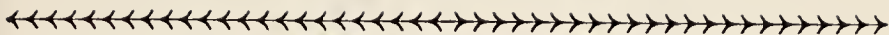
The Man put his assagai down on the ground and held up his arms towards the Ape. The Ape understood and came down the tree a little way. So they stood, the Man on the ground, with his hands held up, and the Ape on the tree, with the baby, which cried

loudly. The big Ape came lower, and the baby boy dropped, and the father caught it. He said that the Ape did not drop the baby by chance, but that he dropped it to pay the Man for the help he had given to an Ape. It may be so, for the Ape people and the Monkey people are our little brothers of the bush. It is often true that if one does good, the good will come back to him.



THE SIXTH NIGHT

The Black Leopard Who Lost the Man in the Tree



THE SIXTH NIGHT

THE BLACK LEOPARD WHO LOST THE MAN IN THE TREE

ONE of the village men began building a new hut, but after he had put up part of the frame, he gave up

his plan and continued to live in his old hut. One night at the fire someone said to him: "Why do you not build the hut or else tear down the frame?"

The old Story-teller said: "You are like the black leopard. You do not finish what you start."

"Tell us about the black leopard," said the Head Man.

Thereupon the Story-teller began a new tale.

As you all know, the Black Leopard is the King of the Leopard family. He does not go about in company with other animal people. He does not talk much with the other Leopard people. He does not even obey the Lion as King of the Beasts of the Bush and of the Plain. The Black Leopard is a warrior who travels alone.

Once a Black Leopard said to himself: "This day I must catch a Man"; so he walked here and there in the bush, trying to find a hunter who was alone.

As you all know, Men do not like the Black Leopard. They fear him. He is a great warrior, a greater warrior than his brother, the Spotted Leopard. After he



is wounded, he refuses to die and continues to fight more bravely than ever. The Black Leopard is indeed a fierce warrior.

One night after the fires had been lit in a village, and after everyone had settled down to talk by the fire, one Man did that which is foolish. He went outside the light of the fires, into the bush. The Man knew that what he did was foolish, but his young bride, whom he had just married, had become sick, and he needed an herb to cure her. He had seen no animals outside the fires that night, and so he thought it might be safe for him to go out just far enough to get the herb that he needed.

In the darkness it took the Man a long time to find the great tree under which grew the herb that he needed for medicine. When he went back towards the fires, he saw a black beast between him and the village. At once the Man climbed a vine and took shelter in a tree. That, too, as you all know, was most foolish, for one must never climb a vine without much care. Great Snakes, and Apes, and Monkeys, and

strange crawling things live on the vines. What the Man did shows that one foolishness leads to another.

Now, it was a Black Leopard that had come near the village fires. The Black Leopard, which is the most quiet of creatures, heard the noise that the Man made, and went at once in that direction. The Black Leopard went to the foot of the tree where the Man had taken refuge, and was about to climb into it to get the Man.

Just then the Black Leopard saw a Buck that was standing still in the bush, trying to hide. At once the Black Leopard thought: "Now I can have a Buck. Later I shall come back and have a Man." So the Black Leopard gave up the plan with which he had started, and ran after the Buck.

Later the Black Leopard came back to the tree and looked for the Man, but he had come down and had gone back safely to the village. The Black Leopard was angry with himself and beat his tail on the ground. He had wished to catch a Man, and now he had lost the chance.

As the Black Leopard walked in the bush, he met a

wise old Elephant who was standing under a tree eating green leaves. He told the Elephant how he had been disappointed. "I thought the Man would stay in the tree," the Black Leopard said.

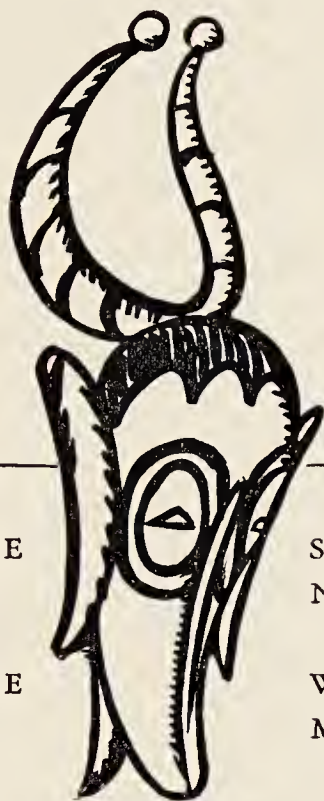
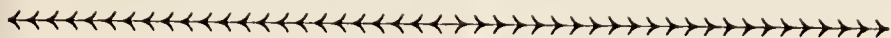
"Are you twins?" asked the Elephant.

"No; why do you ask?" said the Black Leopard.

"How can one person, all alone, be so foolish?" asked the Elephant.

THE SEVENTH NIGHT

The Wandering Monkey



THE

SEVENTH
NIGHT

THE

WANDERING
MONKEY

TELL us, O Teller of Tales," said one of the men who sat around the evening fire, "why did you wander

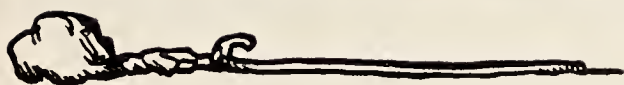
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so far when you were young, and why did you settle down and stay with us when you became old?"

All the men at the fire looked at the old man and listened. They knew that he would answer with a story. For some time the Story-teller looked into the fire and said nothing. No one moved. They knew that in the fire he saw the faces of those whom he had known in other years, and that from the fire he heard the voices of those who were now only wandering spirits.

At length the Story-teller spoke. "It is with me," he said, "as it was with the Monkey who was foolish enough to have no wife."

One day a large old Monkey walked into the village of the Great Apes, who live in the tree-tops. He had with him nothing except a stick that he used to help him in walking, and a large leaf full of nuts. As a visitor should do, he left his stick and his leaf full of nuts at the entrance of the village and asked to be taken to the Head of the village. In such a case the Great Apes would no more take the stick and the nuts and



harm the visitor than should we who are Men, if a stranger were to come to us and ask for shelter.

The Great Apes were glad to have a visitor. They had gone far to a village of Men and had found much good food. They had pulled and broken and dug where Men had made food grow. They had eaten all they could, had thrown away a great deal, and had carried to their own village all that they could carry. Now that they had rested, they were going to have a feast. The Great Apes were glad to show a stranger how brave they were, and how rich they had become.

When the large old Monkey followed the guards and went to the place in a tree-top where the Head of the Great Apes sat with his principal followers and his wife and children, some of the young Apes giggled and laughed. They thought that the old Monkey looked queer, and that he was not half so good-looking as even a bad-looking Great Ape. The old Apes did not laugh. They knew how to treat a stranger who asks for shelter.

The wise old Head of the Great Apes said to the large Monkey: "Welcome, stranger. This village of

ours shall be your home for a day. Where do you come from?"

The wandering old Monkey answered the Head of the Great Apes, saying: "I have no home. I come from no place. I come from no people. I go from place to place in the bush. I stay in every place only a short time, and then I go to another place. I am a teller of tales."

"It is a strange life that you live," said the Head of the Great Apes. "You have no people. You have no tribe. You have no home. Yet, I am sure, you see more of the bush than we do."

"Sometimes," said the old Monkey, "I have good times and good food. Sometimes I gain poor food, or no food at all. Sometimes the Monkey people and the Ape people into whose villages I come drive me away. They hit me with sticks, and they throw things down on me when I try to climb up. Still, I like to live alone. I left my own Monkey people when I was young. They live far away in the bush."

The Head of the Great Apes said: "How can you be happy to live alone? Everyone must have wives and

children in order to be happy. It is true, wives are often a trouble, but they are like food: they are necessary."

The large old Monkey said: "What good would it be for me to have wives and children? Sometimes I cannot find food for myself. If I had a wife, she would scold. If I had a wife I could not wander from village to village and thus see all parts of the bush. If I had children, I might die and have to leave them to some strange tribe of Monkey people or Ape people, and then they might grow up quite different from me. That would not be pleasing. No, my good Head of the Great Apes, I like better to wander about, and thus to see all the bush."

The Head of the Great Apes said no more. He made the stranger welcome and gave him much food and a place on a tall tree where he could sleep safely.

The next morning the large old Monkey gave praise to the Head of the Great Apes, took his leaf full of nuts, some other food that the Great Apes had given him, and his stick, and went away to another part of the bush.

As he did so, the Head of the Great Apes, who sat in his tree-top with his wife and his children, shook his head, and said: "A Monkey or an Ape who is foolish enough to have no wife, and no children, must think of no one but himself. He must be a most unhappy person, for he has made his unhappiness seem to him the best thing. As for me, I am content to stay in this tree-top with my own people, for I am sure that that is best. Let those who will, wander about. A wife and children are needed as much as are food and shelter."

THE EIGHTH NIGHT

The Sick Leopard and the Friendly Tree-cat



THE EIGHTH NIGHT

THE SICK LEOPARD AND THE
FRIENDLY TREE-CAT

I DID not like the man; he was my enemy; but he was one of my own tribe, and so I helped him. I ran back

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and brought the rest of our people, and we drove away the cowardly men of the bush." So spoke a man at the fire, telling how he had found one of the tribe attacked by the man-eaters of the bush.

"You did well," said the Head Man of the village. "One must always help one's own people. That is the law of life. Even if you have a quarrel to the death with a man of your own people, you must fight for him if you find him in danger from another people. He, too, would fight for you. That is the way it should be. A tribesman fights for the tribe. A brother fights for a brother. Afterwards, if you wish, you may slay each other, but you must both fight together against the common foe."

"It is truth, well spoken," said the old Story-teller. "Even the animals of the bush know the same truth. Listen to the story of the sick leopard and his cousin, the tree-cat."

The Head Man of the village, and everyone else at the fire, turned towards the old Story-teller. The boys crept as near as they could, squirming in between the

men and hoping not to be driven back until they had heard the story.

Once, when the rains had been long and heavy, and when the rivers had risen in flood and had drowned many of the animals or driven them far away to higher ground, a Leopard lay in his lair, sick, hungry, and lonesome. That was unusual, because the Leopard is almost never sick; he is such a good hunter that he generally finds more than he can eat; and he likes better to be alone than to be even with another Leopard. This Leopard was so sick that he thought he would be glad to see any kind of animal, no matter what it was.

Just as he thought this, a Tree-Cat, wet with the rains and frightened by the steady thunder and the flashing lightning that shook the bush and made all the trees tremble, dropped down right in front of the sick Leopard.

Both the Tree-Cat and the Leopard were startled to see each other. The Leopard and the Tree-Cat, as you well know, are cousins. They belong to the same tribe, but to different villages. They hate each other,

and so they keep as far apart as they can. The Leopard is big and strong, and very brave, but the Tree-Cat is little and quick and is also very brave. The Tree-Cat makes his home in the trees and in the big vines, and he drops down quickly on other animals, holds on with his sharp claws, and reaches around and bites the throat of whatever he catches. The Tree-Cat is so quick and so fierce that even his big cousin, the brave Leopard, does not like to quarrel with him.

Now, when the sick Leopard saw a Tree-Cat stand in front of him, with his head down, his mouth open, the hair on his back all standing up, and his tail made big, the Leopard thought that he had reached the end of his trail. He knew that he was too sick to fight with any animal, and certainly too sick to fight with a fierce Tree-Cat.

The Leopard is like one of our own warriors. He is brave, and he will die fighting, but he will never ask for mercy. Like a brave warrior who sees many of the enemy around him and knows that he can do nothing but die, the Leopard looked at his cousin, the Tree-Cat. Every moment he expected the fierce Tree-

Cat to leap upon him, but he looked at the Tree-Cat without making a sign that he was afraid and without asking for mercy. Then the Tree-Cat spoke.

"How comes it, brave Leopard, that you lurk here in your lair in this time of great storms and terrible thunder and lightning? Why do you not follow the animals who have fled from the waters?"

"I am sick," answered the Leopard. All the time he looked straight at the Tree-Cat, and looked as brave a warrior as he always does. The Leopard is a good fighter and will never show fear.

The Tree-Cat stopped threatening the Leopard and sat down. "You are my cousin," he said. "You are one of my own tribe. What can I do to help you?"

"Bring me something to eat," said the Leopard. "Bring me some of the healing grasses that grow under the great tree by the bend of the river."

"You are one of my own tribe," said the Tree-Cat. "I go."

He turned and leaped away into the bush.

Soon the Tree-Cat came back with a Bird that he had caught. He dropped the Bird before the sick

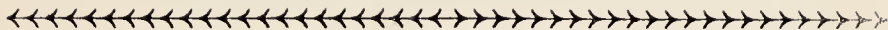
Leopard and then leaped away again to the big tree by the bend of the river. There he found the healing grasses and bit off and pulled up enough for the sick Leopard. This also the Tree-Cat put down before his cousin. Then, having done all this, the Tree-Cat went away to find shelter from the rain.

Now, it happened that a long time after that, the Leopard heard a noise on the edge of the bush, and when he looked through the trees to see what was going on, he saw his cousin, the Tree-Cat, pinned down by a Buck that was about to trample on the Tree-Cat and kill him. At once the Leopard jumped with a great jump, as Leopards do, and came down beside the two fighters. Then, quickly, he saved the Tree-Cat from being killed.

"I did not come to your help because you helped me when I was sick," said the Leopard. "I jumped to help you because you are one of my own tribe. A brave warrior always fights for his own."

THE NINTH NIGHT

The Good-natured Hyena and the Little Lion Children



THE NINTH NIGHT

THE GOOD-NATURED HYENA AND THE LITTLE LION CHILDREN

A MAN and a woman who lived in a hut on the edge of the village went away to get food. They left

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their children playing in and near the hut as usual. It happened that one of the larger boys from a near-by hut came along and saw the children. He stopped and played with them. While he was doing this, he saw a horned viper crawling along the ground towards the baby of the family. The boy pulled the children out of the way and yelled for help. At the same time he did what most boys would not do: he took a big stick and began to strike at the horned viper. Other people, who heard his cry, came up and soon made the hut safe once more. The men of the village praised the boy because he had been so quick and so full of courage. They said that he would make a brave warrior.

That night at the village fire the men talked about what the boy had done. "That is the same boy whom I drove away from my own home the other day," said one of the men. "I found him where he did not belong, and I drove him out. He might have saved my own children. It is not wise to drive out anyone until you know that he is an enemy. It might be that you would drive out a friend."

The old Story-teller, who had remained quiet while

the others had spoken, now said in a low voice: "I will tell you a story."

Once a Lion and a Lioness quarreled. The Lion had stayed away too long, and the Lioness scolded her husband because he had not come back earlier. The Lion was tired and in a bad temper. He listened for a time, but at last became enraged. He said that he had come home worn out, and that his wife did nothing except scold, scold, scold, and that he was tired of hearing her talk, talk, talk, all the time and give him no peace even in his own den. So the Lion roared, and said that he would leave home for good and all, and that he would not come back to hear any more scolding. With that, he leaped away.

At once the Lioness was troubled to think that she had talked so much that she had driven her husband away from the den. Without thinking about her babies, which were very young, nor about the care of her home, she rushed away to catch up with the Lion and to beg him to come back.

Now, while the little Lion children were all alone

in the den, who should come along but a cowardly Hyena? This Hyena had strayed a long way from his people. He had not been able to find any food in the night, in the places where the Lion might have left it, and so he had come out in the daytime to see what he could find. Either the Lion or the Lioness would have driven him away, but the little Lion children did not know how much the Hyena is disliked, and so they said: "Come in and play with us. Our father and our mother have gone away."

The cowardly Hyena was tired. He was far from his usual trail, near villages of Men and out on the open plains. He was glad to rest. He went in and played with the Lion children and was careful not to hurt them at all. They enjoyed his company and jumped about and rolled and laughed a great deal.

Now, it happened that a fierce Leopard came by and heard the noise. He looked into the Lions' den to see what was going on, and, to his surprise, saw a cowardly Hyena playing with the Lion children. The Leopard laughed a wicked laugh that made all the fun stop. The Lion children were afraid, and even

the cowardly Hyena bristled up his coarse hair and stood between the Lion children and the fierce Leopard.

The Hyena was not much afraid of the Leopard, for Leopards do not like to fight with Hyenas, because when a Leopard kills a Hyena, all the other Hyenas trouble the Leopards a great deal. Then, too, the Vultures help the Hyenas.

The Leopard thought to himself: "I must get rid of that cowardly Hyena. Then I can do what I please with the Lion children and get even with the yellow Lion for thinking he is my king. So the wicked Leopard spoke pleasantly, and said: "O Hyena, I am glad to see you, for I have a message for you. Your wife is being attacked by the Lion who lives here. I heard her calling for you to help her."

The cowardly Hyena is not a wise animal, but he was wise enough to see what the Leopard was trying to do. He spoke up and said: "You wicked Leopard, you cannot fool me. You want me to go away so that you can get at these little Lion children. I tell you to your face that you can't get me away, and that you can't

touch these little Lion children while I am here. Do you understand that?"

The wicked Leopard became full of anger and leaped at once upon the cowardly Hyena. Now, you all know that any animal, however weak, will fight when it is attacked. The Hyena was cowardly, but he had to fight, and, as luck would have it, the Hyena killed the wicked Leopard. When the fight was over, the Hyena could do nothing except lie down and pant.

The Mother Lion came back and was surprised to see a dead Leopard near her den and to see a Hyena lying down with the little Lion children. "What is this?" she asked. When the Hyena and the Lion children had told her all the story, the Mother Lion was much pleased. She thanked the Hyena and told him where he could find food.

The Hyena went off down the trail, and whom should he meet but Father Lion himself, coming back home. The great Lion was angry to see a Hyena coming from near the Lion home. "You have been stealing my food," he roared.

The Hyena began to explain what had happened, but the Lion roared again, and said: "Keep still."

"But I killed a wicked Leopard who was going to kill your Lion children," said the Hyena.

"What nonsense!" roared the Lion. "Who ever heard of a weak, cowardly Hyena's killing a brave Leopard? That is a deed that I alone can do. You have been stealing my food, and now I shall punish you." With that, the Lion leaped upon the Hyena.

The noise that the Lion had made in roaring at the Hyena called the Lioness, and so she and all the Lion children came on the run to see whom the Lion was fighting. She saw the Hyena, who had saved her Lion children, in danger himself. She begged the Lion to stop, but he would not listen.

"Oh, what shall I do?" she said. "My husband may kill the Hyena who helped him."

A Hooked Lizard on the ground saw and heard what was happening. The Hooked Lizard said to the Lioness: "Do you want me to help you?"

"Yes," said the Lioness, "but you are too small. You cannot help anybody."

"Watch me," said the hooked Lizard, and he crawled quickly to the place where the Lion was fighting the Hyena. When he got there, he stung the Lion, first in one paw, and then in another, and then on the body. The Lion roared with pain and surprise and jumped away.

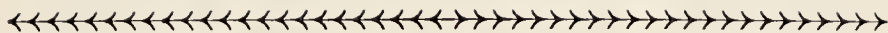
Then the Lioness found time to tell him, all in a breath, that the Hyena was the friend of the Lion family. After that, the Lion and the Lioness let the Hyena have all the food that he needed, and the wandering Hyena went away.

It is not wise to despise anything, however weak or small it may be. Help comes from where we least expect it.



THE TENTH NIGHT

Three Hundred Zebras Who Spoke the Truth



THE TENTH NIGHT

THREE HUNDRED ZEBRAS WHO
SPOKE THE TRUTH

ONE of the men of the village had promised another that if he would help him build a new hut,

he should have a strong copper ax in return. The man had helped build the hut, but the other man had not been willing to give him the copper ax, as he had promised he would do. In the end the Head Man of the village had ordered the owner of the new hut to give the other man the ax that he had promised. "All men must do that which they say they will do," he said.

That night, at the fire, the men of the village spoke about this, and the old Story-teller said: "I will tell you the story of the three hundred zebras and the three lions."

Once a little Lion cub that could just walk strayed away from the Lion den when both Father Lion and Mother Lion were away hunting for food. The little Lion cub walked on and on, as well as it could, and by and by walked into the village of the Zebras, out on the open plain. Now, as you know, the Lions eat the Zebras for their food, and therefore the Zebras are much afraid of Lions. When the little Lion cub came walking into the Zebra village, all the three hundred Zebras were much surprised and much afraid.

Some said: "Let us stamp on the Lion cub and kill it." Others said: "Let us run away and leave it." Still others said: "Let us send it back to the Lion den."

While the Zebras were wondering what to do with the Lion cub, the Father Lion and the Mother Lion and a big Brother Lion came to look for the little Lion cub. They had followed its trail to the Zebra village.

It is easy for even three Lions to do anything with a whole herd of Zebras, because Zebras are timid creatures; so the three Lions soon had the three hundred Zebras all herded together in a mass.

"Why have you stolen our little Lion child?" roared the Father Lion. And then the other two Lions roared out the same question.

The Head Zebra of the herd answered meekly: "O King of the Beasts of the Bush and of the Plain, we did not steal your Lion child. The little Lion cub came walking feebly into our Zebra village, and we were just debating what to do with him."

"You do not say that which is true," roared the Father Lion. "Even a little Lion cub, although it does

not know much, would not think of leaving the Lion home and going to live in a dirty Zebra village."

"It is true," answered the trembling Head Zebra of the herd. "We did not steal the Lion child. If you will go away, you three great Lions, and do us no harm, we will take back your Lion child and put it in your den."

"Ho! Ho!" roared all three Lions together. "What a story! Who ever heard of a Zebra's going to a den of Lions?"

"Who ever heard of a Zebra's saying that which he would not do?" answered the Head Zebra of the herd, for it is true that all Zebras speak only that which is so. They live on the open plains, and they do not deceive.

Just then from the den of the Lions there came cries for help, and the three Lions ran away to see what was happening at their home. While the three Lions had been away, a company of Wicked Snakes, full of poison, had come to attack the other Lion children.

As soon as the three Lions had gone to fight for

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their home, one Zebra said: "Let us now stamp on the little Lion cub and kill it. The three Lions will soon come back, and then they will kill us all. Let us have revenge first."

"No," said the Head Zebra of the herd. "We gave our promise that if the three Lions should go away, we would return the little Lion cub to his den. Who will offer to take the Lion cub back to his home?"

Some of the other Zebras laughed, and said: "Why should anyone be foolish? Is it not true that the Lions will kill and eat whichever Zebra goes near the Lion den?"

At this moment a big Snake that was coiled on a tree near by said: "That is the truth. Leave the little Lion cub to me. Then you Zebras all run away where the Lion will not follow. I will take the Lion cub to his den."

The Zebras knew that the Snake is not a creature that tells the truth. They knew that the Snake would kill the little Lion cub. The Head Zebra of the herd said: "O great Snake, we thank you for your offer.

We who are Zebras have always faced the world without telling lies. We speak that which is true. We live on the open plains. We will do anything rather than not do that which we promise to do."

"I should like to see you Zebras take the little Lion cub back to its den," sneered the big Snake. "You promised that you would do it if the Lions went away. Well, did they not go away? Have you done that which you promised to do?"

"I myself will take the Lion cub to his den," said the Head Zebra of the herd. "I would rather be eaten by Lions than live because I have broken my word."

"We shall all go with you," said all the three hundred Zebras of the herd. "It shall not be said that Zebras did not keep their word."

So the three hundred Zebras, all of them trembling a great deal, took the little Lion cub and walked to the den of the Lions. When they got there, the three great Lions were away, still chasing the wicked Snake tribe. The three hundred Zebras left the little Lion cub in its den, among its little brothers and sisters,

and then they ran as fast as they could until they stopped far out on the plain. They were tired and much afraid, but they were all glad that they had done what Zebras ought to do. "It is a proud thing to be a Zebra," said the Head Zebra of the herd. "A Zebra is not the King of the Beasts, but a Zebra lives on the open plains and speaks the truth."

THE ELEVENTH NIGHT

The Little Elephant Who Wanted to Fly



THE ELEVENTH NIGHT

THE LITTLE ELEPHANT WHO
WANTED TO FLY

ONE of the men of the village had been born with such weak legs that he could not walk about as others could. He could merely hobble here and there among the huts. Because he had to sit still so much, he used his hands a great deal and became the best worker

in the village. He made strong, sharp, well-balanced assagais or spears. He made tom-toms that gave out deep booming sounds. He made earthen jars and wicker baskets. He could weave cloth in bright patterns. Most wonderful of all, he could carve images that brought good luck and make great images that all the people bowed before. The thin little lame man was the most useful person in the village and everyone liked him.

One night, at the fire, the hunters told how bravely they had fought with a hippo. They pictured the scene at the river, the leaping men, the flashing spears, the great beast, the excitement, and the victory that meant so much to the whole village, since it gave them ivory, thick leather, and much food. The hunters gained great praise from everyone.

The thin little lame man praised the hunters, as did the others, but afterwards he put his head on his knees and hid his face.

"What troubles you, Maker of Wonders?" asked a man.

"I, too, should like to go out on the hunt," answered

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the little lame man. "Instead, I must stay here with the women. I cannot do brave things, as others can. Woe is me!"

More quickly than usual, the old Story-teller put out his hand. "Listen, my son, Maker of Many Things. Should a fish wish to run? Should a lion wish to have a long neck like the giraffe? Should an elephant wish to fly like a bird? Hearken, for I speak."

The talk by the fire ceased at once, and the old Story-teller began his tale.

Once a young Elephant was not satisfied with being an Elephant. His father, his mother, and all his brothers in the herd reasoned with him. They told him that he would become great and strong, that he could push over trees, and that he could go through the bush without fear of any creature. To all of this the foolish young Elephant said that he thought that he was born for other things.

One day the Elephant herd was to go on a great run through the trees. They would break down the trees and make a wide path so that it would look as if a

storm had swept past. This was to be one of their happiest days.

"Come," said the Elephant father.

"No," answered the foolish young Elephant.

"Come," said the Elephant mother.

"No," answered the foolish young Elephant.

"Come," said all the herd.

"No," answered the foolish young Elephant.

"It is hard to make a foolish person wise," said one.

"Let us go and leave this young Elephant to his folly."

There was nothing else to do, and so the Elephant herd went away for its day of sport, and the foolish young Elephant stayed behind, to do as he pleased.

When the foolish young Elephant was left alone and knew that he was free to live his own life and to do whatever he wished to do, he lay down on the ground and rolled over and over and kicked his legs in the air, the way he had seen Lion cubs do. "Now I can be like other animals," he said. "It is foolish for a person like me to go around with other Elephants. I can have more fun doing what other creatures do."

So off the foolish young Elephant started, trotting

through the bush as much like a Gazelle as he could, and once in a while trying to leap, the way he had seen Gazelles leap, but he soon found that this hurt his feet and made him much out of breath. Then he tried to sing, the way he had heard Birds sing, but he made such a loud noise that he frightened every creature in the bush, and so he could get near no one to ask him to play. When he noticed that, he kept still and walked quietly. Soon he met a Lizard, for all the other creatures had been frightened away by the noises he had made when he had tried to sing like a Bird.

"Oh, good morning, my pretty Lizard in your green coat. How does it go with you?"

"All goes well with me," the Lizard answered. "But I am worried about my children, who are late in coming home. They swam across the river to visit their cousins, the little Crocodile children, on the mud bank at the bend of the river."

"They will come home all right," said the young Elephant. "Until they do, let's you and me play together. Shall I come up where you are?"

"Dear me! No! No! No! Don't do that! Oh, go away!" the Lizard cried, for when the young Elephant tried to climb up on the vine where the Lizard had gone the moment the Elephant had first appeared, he shook the vine and tore down part of it. The Lizard had climbed upon the vine because she was afraid the Elephant might step on her if she stayed on the ground. Now she feared the Elephant would tear the vine down and step on her anyway.

"Don't you want to play?" asked the young Elephant.

"Oh, no!" answered the Lizard. "I am too worried about my children. Besides, think what would happen. If you try to climb a vine, you tear it down. If I went to a village of Man and climbed up on a hut, and you tried to follow, you would crush the hut. Then the Men would come and throw assagais at you. You and I cannot do the same things, big Elephant boy. Go play with your own kind. Do the things that you were made to do. That is best. Good-by," and the Lizard darted up the vine and out of sight so quickly that the young Elephant blinked.

"Oh, well, I didn't want to play with a Lizard any-

way," said the young Elephant. "I can find better company." So he went on down the trail and after a time met a troop of Apes who were playing catch-me-if-you-can, while one wise old Ape sat on a high place and kept guard to see that no Leopard or Snake surprised them. The Apes ran after one another like streaks of brown. They jumped from rock to rock and from tree to tree. Every Ape tried to run faster than every other Ape.

"That is the game for me," said the young Elephant. "May I play with you?"

"Come on!" cried all the Apes together.

The young Elephant ran after the Apes. They twisted and turned, and leaped and jumped, and he could not go near to one of them. Then they began leaping upon his back and off. They caught his tail. They pulled his nose. Whatever he did, he could not touch one of them. They laughed so that they lay on the ground and rolled over and over. Soon the fat, heavy young Elephant was so out of breath that he could hardly stand up.

"I am no Ape," he said. "I don't want to play this
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game. I don't like it," and he walked away, while all the Apes laughed.

The young Elephant had tired himself so much that now he lay down and went to sleep. When he woke up, he saw a bright green and gold Parrot fly down and light on a branch just over his head.

"That is what I must do," said the young Elephant. "Now I have found it. I am going to fly."

"Come ahead," said the Parrot.

The young Elephant jumped a long time, trying to fly up to where the Parrot sat. The wise old Parrot looked down without smiling at all. "I could do it if I could only get a start," said the young Elephant.

"I'll show you where to get a start," said the Parrot. "Follow me."

Then the Parrot led the young Elephant to the high bank of the river. "Do like this," said the Parrot. She sat on the edge of the bank and then jumped and flew away. The young Elephant went to the edge of the bank, gave a jump, flapped his legs a little, and then fell, ker-splash, into the water.

"Ha, Ha!" laughed the Parrot, and flew away.

The young Elephant crawled out, all wet and muddy, and blowing out water that he had swallowed. One of the scolding little Brown Birds that live near the water had seen what had happened. She said: "Oh, you foolish Elephant boy, go back to your own Elephant people and be contented. You were not made to fly. You can do other things. Don't make a fool of yourself by trying to do everything that other people do. A fish can't live on land. A Bird can't live under the water. Do the thing you were made to do. Then you will be happy."

THE TWELFTH NIGHT

The Black Beetle That Didn't Wish to Work



THE TWELFTH NIGHT

THE BLACK BEETLE THAT DIDN'T
WISH TO WORK

ONE of the men of the village had borrowed a great deal from his neighbors. Instead of sending his own wives to gather food, and instead of going

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out to hunt for himself and his children, he took life easily and slept and did nothing. When he wanted food, he went to another hut. This had gone on for some time when at last the Head Man of the village rebuked him, and said: "You must work for yourself. Hereafter no one shall give to you. You shall work or else you shall go without. It is not right that some should do everything and that others should do nothing."

At the village fire that night the old Story-teller said: "That brother of ours who does not like to work is like the fat, lazy, black beetle who went to the ants."

All the circle of men became quiet, for they wished to hear the story. When everyone looked at him, the Story-teller began.

Once there was a fat, lazy, black Beetle who did not like to work. He lay still and slept a great deal. When he became hungry he went to where other Beetles were and helped himself to the food that they had found.

One day this fat, lazy, black Beetle had been out for
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a walk. He became tired and fell asleep. When he woke up, he was hungry. There were no other Beetles near him, so he said to himself: "I shall go to the White Ants, who are great warriors, and I shall let them give me food."

So the Beetle crawled to the high house of the White Ants, who are brave warriors. At the entrance to the great house the guards of the White Ants at once stopped the Beetle.

"Stop," said the guards. "Do you not know that we White Ants are brave warriors, and that we let no creature come into our strong house?"

"I am tired and hungry," answered the fat, lazy, black Beetle. "I hope you and your brave warriors will give me something to eat."

"We White Ants are warriors, not food-givers. We are fighters, not women," answered the guards all together. "If you come farther, we shall kill you. We have orders from our Head Ant not to let any creature come into our strong place."

"Have you no food to give me?" begged the fat, lazy, black Beetle.

"We have plenty of food," answered the guards. "We are warriors and we go and fight for food, we and our great army of Ants. If you wish food, then you must go and get it, the way we have to. Now go away, or we shall call the rest of the guard, and you know what that will mean."

The fat, lazy, black Beetle did not stay to talk further, because he knew that the White Ants are proud warriors and are quick to become angry. He hurried away. After he had gone down the trail for some distance, he came to two Black Ants who were working hard, bringing home a fat grub that they had found. The Beetle stopped and watched the two Black Ants work. They worked as hard as they could, pushing and pulling the great load and hardly taking any time to rest. All the while they were moving the fat grub towards the home of the Black Ants.

"I think you Black Ants are foolish," said the Beetle. "Why do you work so hard? Why do you not go and call other Black Ants and ask them to help you? Then you would get your food home quickly."

"We Black Ants never ask others to work to help

us," said one of the two. "We believe in work, and we are not afraid to work. Why do you bother us when we are busy?"

"I am hungry," said the fat, lazy, black Beetle. "I hope you will give me something to eat."

The two Black Ants were so surprised that both of them stopped in their work and looked at the Beetle. "You are hungry, and you do not work?" they asked. "Work is the rule of life. Everyone works. We Black Ants all work, and work hard. Even our brave cousins, the great warriors, the White Ants, and even those fierce people, the Red Ants, all work and build great strong places in which to live. We Black Ants are proud because we work even harder than they do. If you are hungry, then you must work."

"But I don't like to work," answered the Beetle. "I like to lie under a stone and sleep."

"Then it must be that you like to starve," said one of the Black Ants. "If you do not like to work, why do you think someone else might like to work for you? We shall give you no food. You cannot expect people to bring everything to you, as if you were the

Head Man of the world.” Then the two Black Ants went to work again, pushing and shoving to take the fat grub home to the other Black Ants.

“Oh, dear! Oh, dear!” said the fat, lazy, black Beetle, “this world is so made that everyone has to work in some way or else starve. Now even I shall have to work.”

“Ho! Ho!” said one of the Black Ants. “Don’t you know that half the fun of life is to work hard for what you have? This grub is going to taste all the sweeter because we are having so much trouble in getting it home. Hard work makes everything taste sweet.”

THE THIRTEENTH NIGHT

The Clumsy Hippo and the Happen-to-be-
Clumsy Gazelle



THE THIRTEENTH NIGHT

THE CLUMSY HIPPO AND THE
HAPPEN-TO-BE-CLUMSY GAZELLE

ONE night the hunters came in late from a long

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journey into the Ondo bush and across a great river. After they had rested a little and had eaten and had rubbed themselves with oil, they sat down by the fire. All the village gathered around, and all kept still until the hunters should speak. The boys sat as close to the hunters as they could and looked at them, thinking that some time they, too, would be great hunters and would go far away into the bush.

"Not far from the great river," said one of the hunters, "we came on the holes that the clumsy hippo makes when he walks where the ground is soft and muddy. We saw these holes, and we knew that the big clumsy hippo was not far away. We were too few to do anything to the hippo, and we knew that he would do nothing to us. We walked on, looking at the holes, so that we should not stumble into one of them, and then, all of a sudden, plump! we almost ran into the clumsy hippo. He stood right there, where he had been walking, as if he had gone to sleep. The big hippo is afraid of nothing, and so he can sleep wherever he pleases."

The village Story-teller looked at the people by the

fire, and drew a long breath. "I will tell a story," he said.

As you all know, the Hippo and the Gazelle are not at all alike. The Hippo is big and clumsy and slow, and the Gazelle is little and lively and quick. The Hippo is as big as forty Gazelles, and he could never catch a Gazelle, no matter how much he tried. In a whole week the Hippo could not think of as many things as the Gazelle can think of in a single moment while she is running. The Hippo does not have to think, because he is almost always safe. The Gazelle has to think all the time, because she is almost never safe.

Once on a time a young Gazelle was frightened by a Leopard. She was so frightened that she ran as fast as she could, jumping over everything and scarcely looking where she was going. She ran towards a river, and before she knew it, she ran—bump! right into a big clumsy Hippo, who was standing up sound asleep.

"Umppphhh! Umppphhh! Umppphhh!" said the big Hippo. "Why do you bump into me and wake me up?"

The Gazelle felt safe now that she was near the Hippo, and, besides, she was so tired that she could hardly run any farther.

"Oh, I am so sorry," she said. "Big Hippo, please excuse me." Then the Gazelle told the big, clumsy Hippo that she had been with all her own people eating soft green grass, and that a robber Leopard had jumped in among them, and that they had all run in different directions, and that she had been so frightened that she had kept on running and then had run—bump! right into the Hippo.

"I am so sorry to have waked you up!" she said. "You know I would not harm anything. I should have looked, but the path was dark, and I saw the river, and I was thinking how cool and how safe the water would be, and then I ran—bump! right into you. I am sorry I was so clumsy."

The big Hippo had stood still all the time the Gazelle spoke, and had not said a word. Now he laughed a low rumbling kind of laugh, which ended in a chuckle.

"You do me good," he said. "Everyone calls me

clumsy and says that I should be more like you, and now you run—bump! right into me and then call yourself clumsy. Some people are not so clever as they are said to be. Now I see that even a Gazelle can be as clumsy as a Hippo, and that makes me laugh. Of course I excuse you, for you did not hurt me, and I know that you did not mean to run—bump! right into me the way you did.”

The Gazelle said: “Thank you, big Hippo,” and then she went bounding away.

The Hippo watched the Gazelle go, and then he said to himself: “No matter how smart you are, it’s a good thing to look where you are going.”

THE FOURTEENTH NIGHT

The Horned Viper That Spoke to the Hooked Lizard



THE FOURTEENTH NIGHT

THE HORNED VIPER THAT SPOKE TO
THE HOOKED LIZARD

THE men at the fire talked about the bird that is the friend of the rhino. "The little bird sits on the rhino's

back," said one of the men. "The rhino cannot see well, and so he needs help. When the bird sees someone coming, he tells the rhino. They are great friends."

"They help each other, the little and the great," said another.

"Despise not a small thing," said the Head Man. "The hooked lizard is small, but he should not be stepped on."

When the talk had gone a little further, the old Story-teller said: "When I was but a boy by a fire, I heard a great teller of tales tell a story about a horned viper and a hooked lizard. I shall tell it."

Once, after the long rains had ended and the sun had come out, a Horned Viper felt especially happy. He said to everyone whom he met: "Let us be happy, for the rains have ended and the warm sun is here again."

The Horned Viper met many of the animal people of the bush, and to all of them he said the same thing.

They were all surprised, but answered, as they should:
"May you also be happy forever, O Horned Viper!"

At last in his journey the Horned Viper met a Hooked Lizard, whom he did not like at all, and to whom he did not usually speak except to say hateful things. This time the Horned Viper was so happy that he raised his head and said to the Hooked Lizard:
"Let us be happy, for the rains have ended and the warm sun is here again."

The Hooked Lizard was surprised to hear such pleasant words from one who usually spoke harshly to him. The Hooked Lizard also felt happy because the sun was again warm and the long rains were over. At the same time he felt proud that the Horned Viper should speak to one so low as he was, in such a pleasant manner. The Hooked Lizard answered, as he should:
"May you also be happy forever, O Horned Viper!"
Then they passed on.

After a time the Horned Viper came into a great open space and lay down to sleep in the sun. Just then a company of boys from a village of Men near by came in their play. They saw the Horned Viper and

shouted: "Here is a Horned Viper. Let us take sticks and stones and kill it!" Then the boys began to pick up heavy sticks and to gather stones. The Horned Viper looked on all sides to see how he could run away from this great danger, but there were so many boys that they were all about him. Whichever way he ran, he would meet an enemy. "Woe is me!" said the Horned Viper. "This day was so happy, and now I have come into peril of my life."

Then the Horned Viper heard a small voice not far away. It was the voice of the Hooked Lizard. "O Horned Viper, I see your great danger. Shall my small friends and I come to your help?"

The Horned Viper would never have asked the Hooked Lizard to help him, but now that he was in so great danger, and now that the Hooked Lizard asked if he might help, he answered quickly: "O Small Brother, I shall fight for myself, but it will be a losing fight. If you come to my help, it will be good."

Then the Hooked Lizard gave his battle-cry, and from all sides the warriors of the Hooked Lizard people came upon the open space. When the boys saw such

a great number of Hooked Lizards, all of them ready to do battle, they forgot the Horned Viper and ran away.

The Horned Viper thanked the Hooked Lizard and his warriors and then went on down the trail. When the Horned Viper had traveled some distance, he saw his great cousin the Python lying on a rock in the sun. "Let us be happy, for the rains have ended and the warm sun is here again," said the Horned Viper. "May you also be happy forever!" answered the great Python.

Then the Horned Viper told his cousin, the great Python, about the adventure, and how he had been saved by a Hooked Lizard.

The great Python is wise, and he speaks to all the creatures of the bush. He is not spiteful and wicked like the Horned Viper. He answered: "O Horned Viper, if one is full of wickedness, he cannot see good in others. If one is wise, he knows that even small things may be of great help."



THE FIFTEENTH NIGHT

The Fat Old Elephant and the Cross Old Rhinoceros



THE FIFTEENTH NIGHT

THE FAT OLD ELEPHANT AND THE CROSS OLD RHINOCEROS

Two brothers of the village quarreled so much that the Head Man of the village spoke to them and told them to hold their peace. At the fire that night the old Story-teller looked first at one brother and then at

the other and said: "I shall tell the story of the elephant who fought with the rhino."

The Head Man of the village smiled and motioned to the Story-teller to speak.

The Elephant and the Rhino are cousins, but they do not often speak with each other. The Elephant knows that he is wiser than the Rhino, and the Rhino hates the Elephant because of the Elephant's wisdom. When they meet, they quarrel.

One day a fat old Elephant met a cross old Rhino. The Rhino cannot see well, and he would not have known that anyone was coming if the little Bird that is his friend had not told him. "Your cousin the Elephant is coming," said the Bird, and she flew up into the air to see what else she could see.

The Elephant laughed and said: "Why don't you see things for yourself? Here you are, a great big fellow, and yet you have to have a small Bird tell you when someone is coming."

"There you are," answered the Rhino, "so foolish that Men can catch you just by digging deep holes and

covering them with bamboo. You walk right into the holes and get caught. You need small Birds yourself."

"I at least obey the Lion, who is King of the Beasts of the Bush and of the Plain," said the Elephant.

"Why should I obey anyone?" answered the Rhino. "I do as I please. I have no king. I am my own king."

"You eat thorns," said the Elephant, "and that is why you have such a bad temper.

"You are afraid of small running creatures," answered the Rhino. "You jump when you see a small Lizard."

"You are so bad-tempered that you have no friends. You have to eat by yourself," said the Elephant.

"You go around with three or four hundred other big lazy Elephants. You are afraid to go alone," answered the Rhino.

"You have small eyes like a Wart-Hog, but the Wart-Hog can see better than you can," said the Elephant.

"You have big ears that look like the peeled-off bark of an old tree," said the Rhino.

"You have a great hook on your nose that gives you a most hateful look," said the Elephant.

"You have a great long nose that you poke into everyone else's affairs," answered the Rhino.

So they went on quarreling, hour after hour. The more they said, the more angry they became. At last the Rhino was ready to put his head down and to charge at the Elephant and try to kill him.

Just then a Wild Buffalo walked along and asked: "What is the matter? Why are you two cousins quarreling?"

Then the Elephant complained that the Rhino would not obey the Lion as King of the Beasts of the Bush and of the Plain, and that he lived by himself and did as he pleased and said hateful words to everyone. The Rhino complained that the Elephant was proud, that he thought himself better than anyone else, and that he went around with three or four hundred brothers and sisters of his and broke down trees and frightened everything in the bush.

The Wild Buffalo said to the Rhino: "What were you going to do when I came along?"

"I was going to charge against the Elephant and teach him a lesson," answered the Rhino. "With this strong horn of mine I should soon teach that fat, lazy Elephant how to behave."

"Don't you know that you cannot teach him how to behave if you behave badly yourself?" asked the Wild Buffalo. "And don't you know," he said to the Elephant, "that you cannot make the Rhino better by saying hateful words to him?"

Then the Wild Buffalo said to both of them: "Don't you know that you two are cousins? You belong to one family, and yet you quarrel and were about to fight to the death. Is that fitting? Surely, it is best for those of one family to help each other, or at least to let each other alone; but it is not best for those of one family to fight each other."



THE SIXTEENTH NIGHT

The Lion and the Neighborly Hippopotamus



THE SIXTEENTH NIGHT

THE LION AND THE NEIGHBORLY HIPPOPOTAMUS

COME on the hunt with us," said one of the young men to the old Story-teller. "You will see brave sport. When we are tired, and sit in the shade to rest, you can tell us tales."

"No," said the Story-teller. "It is not for me to go on the hunt. Many a time have I been on the trails,

beyond the great river, and even far beyond the bush, to the great water itself that has no end. Much have I seen, and many battles have I fought, but now for me the path of the hunter would be toil and not sport. I must lie idle here in the village and remember old tales that I heard in distant lands. It is with me as it was with the lion who became old and sick."

Once there was a Lion who had been King over all the Beasts of the Bush and of the Plain for far and near. He had been a good King and had ruled with wisdom. He had been just and had seen that even the small creatures of the bush and of the plain had that which it was right for them to have. For that reason all the beasts liked this old Lion.

Although the Lion had been a brave warrior and a wise King he grew old and lost his teeth. His wives left him, and he could no longer run with other Lions and roar in the night, making the bush and the plain tremble. He had great trouble in finding food, and if it had not been for some of the smaller animals, who

remembered the wisdom and the justice of the Lion, he might have starved.

The old Lion lay in his den, not far from a wide river. One day he looked down on the river and saw that the Hippo people were having great sport. They rose from the water and then went down again. They rolled over and over and made great splashing. They rolled with one another and made waves wash up upon the shore of the river. Although the old Lion now had such weak eyes that he could hardly see at all, he noticed that the young Hippo boys and girls were racing and seeing which one of them could stay longest under water, and which could push the other over first. The old Lion sat and smiled to see all this.

While the old Lion lay there in the shade of a tree by his den and watched the sport, an old Hippo saw him and said to the others: "See the old King of the Beasts. Now he can do nothing except lie there by his den. I remember when he used to run at night through the bush and over the plain and roar so loudly that he made all the creatures of the bush and of the plain tremble, for he was a great King of the Beasts.

Now he is old, and he has trouble to find food. It is a pity."

One of the young Hippos who had heard the old Hippo speak said: "I will go over and talk to him. It may be that I can please him." So the young Hippo swam to the shore and walked slowly to where the old Lion lay.

"O King of the Beasts of the Bush and of the Plain," said the young Hippo, using the title that the Lion had once had, but now had no longer, "may I speak with you?"

The old Lion lay with a smile on his face, watching the Hippos. He even hummed a little song, because he liked to see the sport. It made him think of his own young days.

"Welcome," said the old Lion to the young Hippo. "Speak."

"I come, O Lion," said the young Hippo, "to invite you to join us in our sport. Come down to the river and swim and dive with us. It is great fun."

The old Lion was pleased that the young Hippo should ask him to join in the sport, but he answered:

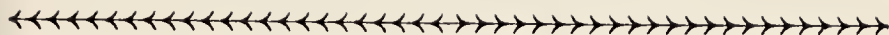
“Do you not know that what is sport for you would be death for me? When one is young, it is delight to take part in sport. When one is old, it is pleasant to look at sport and to think of the past. It is best for me, who am old, to lie here and look on.”

The young Hippo said: “Then if you cannot come with us, we shall play where you can see us most easily.” So he said Farewell and turned to go back to the river.

The old Lion said: “One of the things that makes old age most sweet is to have the young remember those who are old.”

THE SEVENTEENTH NIGHT

The Conceited Elephant and the Very Lively Mosquito



THE SEVENTEENTH NIGHT

THE CONCEITED ELEPHANT AND THE VERY LIVELY MOSQUITO

IT WAS the season after the great rains, and the mosquitoes were especially active. The men at the fire slapped themselves and moved about. There was no way to escape the clouds of mosquitoes. "These small warriors do what our enemies in the bush do

not dare to do," said the Head Man. "They come to our village and attack us at our own fire."

"A mosquito may make an elephant beg for mercy," said the old Story-teller.

"Tell us the tale," said the Head Man.

"You shall hear a story that I laughed at when I was but a boy, in a land far from here," said the Story-teller.

Once a great Elephant, the Head Elephant of a herd of many hundreds of Elephants, stood by a tree. He said aloud: "What a great Elephant I am! I am the largest of all the Elephants of the herd. My ivory tusks are much longer and heavier than are the tusks of any other Elephant that I have ever seen. There is no one who dares to oppose me. The other Elephants of the herd go where I order. My cousins, the water-swimming Hippos, keep away from me. My wicked cousins, the half-blind Rhinos, move away when they see me and my herd. Even the Lion, the King of all the Beasts of the Bush and of the Plain, lets me alone,

and when he roars at night, I do not tremble. I am indeed great."

Now, it happened that the Head Mosquito of a great cloud of Mosquitoes was flying about under the same tree. That Head Mosquito heard what the Head Elephant said. He laughed, for he was a terrible Mosquito. Because he was the Head Mosquito he was much larger than other Mosquitoes, and much more active. He had a longer sting than any other Mosquito, and he was much more daring.

The Head Mosquito said to himself: "Hear that Elephant talk! I am better than he is, because I can make him jump and run. With my cloud of Mosquito warriors I can make the whole Elephant herd move. I alone can fight even the great Elephant, the Head of the herd."

So the Head Mosquito of the cloud of Mosquitoes said to the Head Elephant of the herd: "O great Elephant, how do you find yourself today?"

The big Elephant opened his eyes a little wider and wondered if he had dreamed that someone spoke to him. He thought that he had heard a small voice speak

to him. He saw no one, and so he thought that he had dreamed he had heard someone speak.

Then the Head Mosquito flew close to the Head Elephant's ear and shouted as loudly as he could: "O great Elephant, how do you find yourself today?"

The Head Elephant looked around everywhere to see who was speaking, but he could see no one. He looked everywhere, but no one was near.

So the Head Mosquito flew to the big Elephant's other ear and drew a deep breath and yelled just as loud as he could: "O great Elephant, how do you find yourself today?"

Again the big Elephant looked all around and saw no one. This made him angry and he cried out: "Whoever you are, come out into the open where I can see you, Hyena that you are!"

The Head Mosquito, who had spoken politely to the Head Elephant, did not like to be called a Hyena, for that is a name that no one likes to be called.

The Head Mosquito said to himself: "First, this Elephant is conceited and thinks that he is better than anyone else. Second, this Elephant insults me, the

Head Mosquito of the cloud of Mosquito warriors, and calls me a Hyena. Truly, I shall make him suffer."

So the Head Mosquito flew in front of the eyes of the Head Elephant and said: "O great Elephant, you have said harsh words to the Head Mosquito of the cloud of Mosquitoes. I shall punish you."

Now the Head Elephant saw the Mosquito and knew who had spoken to him. He laughed and said: "Oh, is it you, small Mosquito? I heard a voice, and thought that someone of importance was speaking to me. Now I see that it was only you, small Mosquito. You are so small that I could not even see you."

"I may be small," said the Mosquito, "but I am the Head Mosquito of the cloud of Mosquitoes."

"Ho! Ho!" said the Elephant. "I could step on you and not even know that I had stepped on anyone."

"I am a warrior," said the Head Mosquito, "and I shall not let you or anyone else speak to me in such harsh language."

"Ho! Ho!" laughed the Elephant. "I should like to see you play some of your tricks on me. I should soon smash you flat. Don't talk as if you were big."

The Head Mosquito of the cloud of Mosquitoes now became more angry than before. He flew quickly to the very tip of the big Elephant's nose and stung the Elephant in the soft, tender part.

"Ouch!" yelled the big Elephant, and he waved his trunk in the air.

The Head Mosquito had expected that, and he hung on, and then stung the big Elephant again in the soft, tender part of the nose. "Ouch! Ouch!" roared the big Elephant. "Don't do that."

The Head Mosquito hung on while the big Elephant waved his trunk some more, and then he stung the Elephant again.

"Ouch! Ouch! Ouch!" trumpeted the big Elephant, and he jumped and reared and waved his trunk.

"Ha, ha!" laughed the Head Mosquito. "You *will* tell me that I am small."

Now the Head Mosquito was so happy that he let go for a minute, and just at that time the big Elephant saw him and hit him with his trunk and smashed him flat.

The Head Elephant went away and found a pool of water into which he could dip the end of his nose. "I see," said he, "that, no matter how good a fighter one is, there is always someone who is a little better."

THE EIGHTEENTH NIGHT

The Giraffe Who Thought That She Had a Good Heart

.



THE EIGHTEENTH NIGHT

THE GIRAFFE WHO THOUGHT THAT
SHE HAD A GOOD HEART

I SHOULD like to have helped him," said a man at the fire, "but you know how it is. My wives and my chil-

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dren were expecting me to come home with food. One of my children was sick. I did what I could, and then I hurried on. I told others, and then they went and got him."

"If you had been hurt by a wild beast and had been lying in the bush alone, calling for help, you would not have liked it if a man of your own people had helped *you* in that way," said the Head Man sternly. "You would have wished any man who found *you* to do more than you did."

The man hung his head and made no answer. The old Story-teller looked at him as a father looks at a child who has done wrong. He poked the fire a little with his stick. The circle became quiet.

"You make me think," said the Story-teller, "of the giraffe who thought that she had a good heart."

A Zebra had been going along the trail on her way to the water-hole to drink. A great branch fell from a tree and knocked the Zebra down. The poor Zebra could not get up. She thought her back had been broken. She was afraid that a Lion or a Leopard

might come along and find her caught by the tree. Because of all this the Zebra wept.

Now, it happened that a Giraffe came by. A Giraffe, as you all know, is an animal that we do not see in our part of the bush. This Giraffe had wandered far from her own people.

As soon as the Zebra saw the Giraffe, she gave a little scream, because of her pain, because she feared whatever might come, and because she was so surprised to see a Giraffe.

At first the Giraffe, who is not at all brave, turned and ran, because she thought the animal on the trail might be a Lion. Then she heard the voice of the Zebra and stopped a long way off. After she had stood still a little while, the Giraffe said: "Why do you scream so and scare people who come along the trail? Do you think that is a good thing to do?"

"You would scream if you were here where I am," said the Zebra, with tears in her eyes. "I am helpless. My back may be broken. I cannot move. The pain is great. A big branch fell on me. I am afraid a Lion or a Leopard may come."

The tall Giraffe put out her long neck and looked more closely. She looked a long time and then made up her mind that it was as the Zebra said. She went close to the Zebra and said: "Oh, I am so sorry for you! I will do anything, no matter what it is, to help you."

The poor Zebra was much pleased. "That is good," she said. "Stay with me and take care of me until my own people come to look for me."

"Now, that is too bad," said the tall Giraffe. "I can do anything except that. At any other time I could have stayed, but now I must go to the water-hole before dark. What can I do for you?"

"I understand your hurry," said the hurt Zebra. "Please run as fast as you can to the Zebra people, much farther back on the trail, and tell them that I am here, and that I need help."

"Oh, I am so sorry!" said the tall Giraffe. "I am sure that you know how much I wish to help you. Really, I am going in just the opposite direction. Your Zebra people are so far back on the trail that I should surely be late in getting to the water-hole. Tell me

something else to do for you, because I wish to help you."

The poor Zebra, who was in pain and who was afraid, now cried so that she could hardly speak at all. She said to the Giraffe: "Please bring me a little water. My lips are hot with fever."

The Giraffe said: "I am so sorry! I should like to bring you some water, but you understand. The Lions and the Leopards may be at the water-hole by the time I get there, and I should not like to disappoint you. Besides, I have nothing to carry water in. Even if I had, the water-hole is so far from here that I might not have time. Do tell me what I can do for you."

Now, in spite of her pain and her fear, the Zebra became angry and said: "O tall Giraffe, you say that you are my friend. You say that you wish to help me, and that you will do anything, and yet, to every single thing that I ask you, you make some excuse. You talk a great deal about help, but you don't give any."

The tall Giraffe was angry at the way the Zebra spoke. She said: "You are ungrateful. You do not

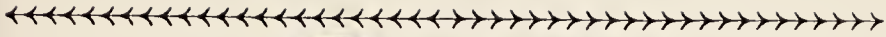
deserve help. I offer to help you, and then you talk to me like that.”

So the tall Giraffe walked away, holding her head high in the air, and left the poor Zebra lying under the tree, crying with pain.

A Parrot, who is a wise bird, and who dares to say anything to anyone, flew to a branch near the trail and, when the tall Giraffe passed by, called out: “People who make excuses aren’t much good at giving help.”

THE NINETEENTH NIGHT

The Boasting Elephant and the Fighting
Hooked Lizards



THE NINETEENTH NIGHT

THE BOASTING ELEPHANT AND THE
FIGHTING HOOKED LIZARDS

ONE of the warriors at the fire was unusually large and strong. "When I go into battle, all my enemies

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fear me," this man said. "They see that I am larger than they, and they fear to fight me."

The wrinkled old Story-teller said quietly: "It is not always the strong who win the fight; it is not always the large whom men fear."

Once a great Elephant went walking alone through the bush. Why he did this I do not know, because Elephants most often go in bands of twenty or thirty, and sometimes even three or four hundred. Some people say that Elephants like to have company. Others say that Elephants are afraid to travel alone. Whatever the reason, this Elephant went walking alone.

By chance the Elephant stepped into the village of the Hooked Lizards. The Elephant's heavy step called all the warriors of the Hooked Lizards out from where they had been sleeping. When the Elephant looked down, he was surprised to see that he was surrounded by Hooked Lizards. Whatever way he might step, there stood warriors of the Hooked Lizard people.

The Head of the Hooked Lizards said: "How is it, O Elephant, that you walk into our village and wake
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us all from our sleep? How is it that you come alone, instead of with the herd? Is it possible that an enemy has driven you here?"

The Elephant wished that he had not walked into the village of the Hooked Lizards, but he saw no way to get out unless he could make them willing to let him go. So the Elephant said: "I was just going down the trail to see what I could see. I did not notice that I had come into your village until you all came out."

The Head Lizard said: "My warriors and I will go with you. You might lose your way. Enemies might attack you."

The Elephant now saw that the Hooked Lizards did not believe what he had said. He knew that they thought he had come into their village to do them harm. He understood that they were making fun of him. All this made the Elephant angry, and, without thinking, he said: "Who would wish the help of Hooked Lizards, little creatures who have enough to do to take care of themselves? Even a Boa Constrictor would swallow you and your army of warriors and then not have enough for dinner. Don't be silly. I

am old enough and big enough and brave enough to take care of myself. If you do not get out of my way, I shall step on many of your warriors. Who dares to withstand me? With my great feet and my mighty trunk and my enormous size I can overwhelm anyone. All things fear me when they see me. I am the breaker of trees."

The Elephant said most of this because he was afraid. He hoped to frighten the Hooked Lizards and lead them to get out of his way. He said to himself: "Oh, I do hope I can get away without trouble."

The Head of the Hooked Lizards said: "Who is afraid of anything because it is big? O great Elephant, we shall not harm you, but we shall teach you not to boast too much about being big. Some day something much smaller than we are may do you harm. Let this be a lesson to you."

The Elephant laughed, and said: "You can't teach me anything, you and your small warriors. If you try to do anything to a great creature like me, I shall teach you a lesson that you will remember."

The Head of the Hooked Lizards gave the signal,

and all the warriors of the Hooked Lizards ran up the Elephant's legs and all over his body until he was completely covered by Hooked Lizards. At every tender part of his body were warriors of the Hooked Lizards, ready to sting him and waiting only for the orders of the Head of the Hooked Lizards. Even the Elephant's trunk was covered with the fierce creatures.

The Elephant knew what would happen if he danced about and tried to knock them off. He stood quite still and trembled from head to foot. When he saw that he could do nothing, he said: "O Head of the Hooked Lizards, I did not mean what I said to you. I was only fooling. It was this morning that I said to the Crocodile, who is your cousin: 'I like the Hooked Lizard people, and I shall go and visit them in their village today and tell them so.' "

The Head of the Hooked Lizards grinned, because he knew that he and his warriors had the Elephant so that he could not move without being hurt. He knew that the Elephant had said nothing to the Crocodile.

The Head of the Hooked Lizards said: "O Elephant, do you wish to step on Hooked Lizards?"

"No, I shall never again speak of stepping on brave Hooked Lizards," said the Elephant.

The Head of the Hooked Lizards gave orders to his warriors, and they all slid down from the Elephant and stood waiting on the ground.

"Please, may I go past you?" said the Elephant. "I do not wish, even by accident, to step on any of you brave warriors."

The Hooked Lizards moved and let the Elephant go. The Elephant said: "Farewell," and then walked a little way, and then ran as fast as he could in order to get far away from the Hooked Lizards.

Soon the Elephant met a Gazelle, who said: "Why are you in such a hurry, great Elephant?"

The Elephant felt ashamed to tell why he was running, and so he said: "I am running to find a Hooked Lizard that bothered me the other day. If I ever find him I will ——"

Just then a Hooked Lizard dropped down from a branch of a tree and fell on the ground between the Elephant and the Gazelle. The Elephant thought that he might be near another village of Hooked Lizards,

and so he did not wait to explain anything further to the Gazelle. Instead, he ran away as fast as he could.

The Hooked Lizard laughed and said: "Is it not strange that big creatures run so fast when they see small creatures? I had rather be little and brave than be big and cowardly."

"Dear me!" said the Gazelle, "I thought the Elephant was running after a Hooked Lizard, and now I see that he is running away from one. How strange!"

THE TWENTIETH NIGHT

The Buffaloes Who Held a Feast



THE TWENTIETH NIGHT

THE BUFFALOES WHO HELD A FEAST

A QUARREL arose in the village because a man
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ordered another to help him. The men had been about to fight when the Head Man stopped them. The first man said that he had not spoken hateful words. The second man said that he saw no reason why he should be ordered about by anyone.

That night, at the fire, the Story-teller said: "Listen to words of wisdom. It is not what a man says, but how a man speaks, that carries weight."

Once the Buffalo people had a great feast just before the long rains. They sent a messenger to the Rhinoceros people, saying: "Come over to us." That was all. The messenger did not explain why they should come, but he spoke as if it were an order.

The Rhinoceros people were angry and could not think why the Buffalo people should dare to order them to come over to the Buffalo village. The Head of the Rhinoceros people called the elders of the tribe together and they talked about the matter.

The messenger of the Buffalo people went back and told what he had said. The Head of the Buffaloes saw

that the invitation that they had meant to be kindly had been delivered in a harsh way. At once he sent another messenger to explain.

The second messenger came to the Rhinoceros people and said: "O noble warriors of the Rhinoceros people, the Buffaloes are holding a feast. They will be honored if you noble warriors will come and join in the feast and share in the food. Besides, they will give you gifts and remember forever the honor of your coming."

If the first messenger had said that, the Rhinoceros people would have been glad to go to the Buffalo feast. The first messenger had spoken rudely. Now the Rhinoceros people feared that the Buffalo people were planning evil. They said to one another: "Those wicked Buffalo people wish to get us into their power." So they declined the invitation.

The messenger of the Buffaloes walked home slowly, wondering what he could do to make the Rhinos come to the feast. When he was not far from the Rhino village he met a Lion. At once, without thinking, he

said just what he had in mind: "O Lion, go to the village of the Rhino people and tell them to come to our feast."

If the messenger of the Buffaloes had taken time to think, he would have spoken thus: "O noble Lion, King of the Beasts of the Bush and of the Plain, I beg you to help me, and to help all my people, who will be grateful to you forever. I beg of you to ask the Rhino people to come to share in the Buffalo feast and to gain gifts."

Because the Buffalo spoke in a hurry, he spoke rudely. Therefore the Lion laughed in his face, and said: "Are you the King of the Beasts, that you order me to do thus and so? I shall not permit you to talk to me so. With one blow of my paw I can break your neck."

At this the Buffalo became angry, for the Buffalo is not a good subject of the Lion. He said: "I suppose you think that I asked you to help me because I think that you are King of the Beasts of the Bush and of the Plain. Let me tell you that we Buffaloes and our

friends the Rhinos do not care what orders you give. You are not King for us. We do as we please."

So it happened that the Lion and the Buffalo fell into a quarrel because the Buffalo spoke so quickly that he forgot to speak politely. The Buffalo was so enraged that he lowered his head and ran full tilt at the Lion. The Lion rose to meet him and gave him one blow from his great paw so that the young Buffalo messenger rolled over on the ground.

Just then an old Elephant came up and stopped the Lion from tearing the Buffalo, and the Buffalo from charging again at the Lion.

The Elephant is wise, and he spoke politely, saying: "O noble and great warriors, O Lion, King of the Beasts of the Bush and of the Plain, and O Buffalo, noble warrior who fears no one, pray tell me why you fight."

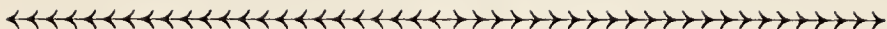
Each one explained to the wise old Elephant what the quarrel was about. "I see," said the wise old Elephant, "It is your words and not your hearts that are bad. Let us all go together to the village of the Rhinos and invite them to the Buffalo feast."

So they all went together back to the Rhino village. The wise old Elephant spoke politely, and all the Rhinos went to the feast and had a joyful time. Of course, the Head of the Buffalo people asked the Lion, the King of the Beasts of the Bush and of the Plain, to come to the feast, and they placed the wise old Elephant, who knew how to talk politely, in the place of honor at the right hand of the Head of the Buffalo people.

Thoughtless words may hurt like arrows. Even a good heart needs good words to tell its meaning. He who speaks well avoids much trouble.

THE TWENTY-FIRST NIGHT

The Wise Elephant and the Disagreeable Leopard



THE
TWENTY-FIRST

NIGHT

THE
ELEPHANT
DISAGREEABLE

WISE
AND THE
LEOPARD

ONE of the men at the evening fire said in a low voice: "I saw a leopard today. He was at the water-

hole, and he was just about to drink. When he saw me, he ran away. A leopard has no friends. He hates everyone, and everyone hates him."

The Story-teller poked the fire a little. At once all the men around the fire stopped in their talk. They knew that the old man was thinking. The Story-teller looked straight before him and sat without moving at all. No one else moved. So they sat for a time. Then the Story-teller looked at the men and said: "Do you know what the wise elephant said to the disagreeable leopard? Listen."

One day, at the water-hole, the animal people came down to drink, as they always do, every kind of animal coming at the time that the animal people have set, and then going away quickly to make room for the next kind. They follow the law that they themselves have set.

It happened that day that a wise old Elephant did not feel like walking far away with his people. He stood in the shade of a tree that grew near the water-hole. He felt like standing there and going to sleep.

While the wise old Elephant stood there in the

shade, almost asleep and not making any noise at all, a Leopard came near the water-hole. The Leopard, as you all know, likes to be alone, and he wishes most of all to be alone when he drinks.

The Leopard, who sees everything as quickly as if he had many eyes, at once saw the Elephant. "Unnnn!" he said. "Why are you there under the tree? This is the water-hole where we must all drink."

The Elephant did not move. He was not at all afraid of the Leopard.

The Leopard growled again. "This is not your custom," he said. "What are you thinking about? Why do you stand under the tree?"

"Are you a friend of mine to whom I should tell all things?" asked the Elephant.

"No, I am not your friend," the Leopard answered. In his heart he wished that he could leap upon the old Elephant and tear him to pieces as if he were a Gazelle. He raised one paw as if he were about to strike with it. "I have no friends," he said, "and I want none. I can take care of myself."

The wise old Elephant had a great many friends.

He liked to go with the herd every day. He looked at the disagreeable Leopard and said: "Can it be true that you have no friends?"

"Unnnn!" said the Leopard. "Why do you ask? Indeed I have no friends. Once or twice I thought I had friends, but they did not help me. They became my enemies. No one likes me, and no one helps me. I can take care of myself."

"It may be that you have some good friends and do not know it," said the Elephant.

"Unnnnnn!" said the Leopard. "I see faults in everyone. Why should I have a friend? No one is brave enough, or quick enough, or strong enough, or good enough. There is something wrong with everyone. One is too cowardly; one is too slow; one is too weak; one is too fierce. I see these faults in everyone. I hate everyone. I can take care of myself."

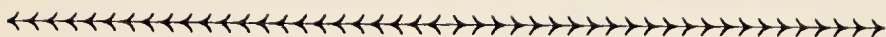
The wise old Elephant looked straight at the disagreeable Leopard and said: "If you see faults in everyone, then it must be that everyone sees faults in you. It is time that I followed the herd." So the Ele-

phant left the shade of the great tree and went off down the trail.

“Unnnnn!” said the disagreeable Leopard. “It is true. Hatred does create hatred.”

THE TWENTY-SECOND NIGHT

The Witch Woman Who Bewitched the Fish



THE TWENTY-SECOND NIGHT

THE WITCH WOMAN WHO
BEWITCHED THE FISH

WHY is it that there are some people who will not eat fish?" asked one of the men at the fire. "Why is it that water is taboo? Why do some people never

even once go in canoes, with torches, and catch fish in nets? Are not fish good to eat?"

"Water is taboo because it is full of hidden danger," answered a wrinkled old man who sat close to the fire, for he was so old that he liked the warmth much more than did the young men. "In the muddy water are crocodiles. They reach out and pull a man down. It is a wise thing that water is taboo."

"Fish are good to eat," insisted the one who had asked the question.

"In fish, too, are hidden dangers, as we all know," said the old man. "If we keep fish too long, a devil enters into every fish, and if men eat, then they sicken and die. That we all know."

The old Story-teller smiled, and said, as he looked steadily into the fire: "And we know much else, too."

"Speak," cried many of the men. "Tell us."

Then the Story-teller began.

Long, long ago, in this land, near a great river, lived a woman named Afrida. She had given her husband



no sons, and so he had driven her out. A woman without sons is like an Elephant without a trunk.

Afrida did not know it, and the people of her village did not know it, but she was a witch. She wandered away from her husband's huts and lay down by the river and wept for a long time. Then she slept there by the river. In her sleep Afrida dreamed that a great Fish came up out of the water and said to her: "O Afrida, you have given your husband no sons, and he has driven you out. Go down into the water of the river, and call to the Fish, and they will be as sons to you."

Then Afrida awoke, and went back to her husband, and said: "Be of good cheer, my master, for now I shall have many sons to give you honor and to bear your name." Then her husband was glad and welcomed her home and made a great feast in her honor, a feast in honor even of a woman. All the people of the village rejoiced and beat the tom-toms and made pledges to the fetish gods.

Time went by, and then one day, at the time when the womenfolk of the village were drawing water

for their cooking, a young girl came running to the village, shouting out: "Afrida has bewitched the Fish! Afrida has bewitched the Fish!"

All the people of the village were startled, and they ran to where the girl had said Afrida was. There they saw a strange sight. Afrida had walked into the water until she stood in it up to her knees and more, and she had held out her hands over the water, as she had dreamed that the Fish had told her to do. Then, when she had done this, all the Fish swam to where she stood, and leaped out of the water and dived and sported about and looked up at her with their great eyes, and they said, so she told afterwards: "O Afrida, we are as sons to you. You shall call us by your name, and we shall do your bidding."

Afrida's husband came with the people of the village, and he heard no voice, nor did anyone else, but he saw Afrida stand in the water, with the Fish leaping about her. Then he knew at once that Afrida was a witch woman, and that she had bewitched the Fish. Neither he nor anyone else wished to eat the Fish that Afrida had bewitched, and so, from that

day on, none of the people of that village ate Fish. For the same reason, many of the people in other villages ate no more Fish, for Afrida, the witch, had bewitched them.

Every day until she died, Afrida went down into the water and held out her arms and called, as the Fish in her dream had told her to do, and when she did this, all the Fish, great and small, came to her and leaped out of the water.

There is indeed wisdom in old stories, for they who are careless in what they eat do not live long lives.



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